

**Minutes**  
**Budget Retreat**  
**Aberdeen Town Board**

March 15, 2019  
Friday, 8:30 a.m.

Aberdeen Fire Station  
Aberdeen, North Carolina

The Aberdeen Town Board met Friday, March 15, 2019 for the Budget Retreat. Members present were Mayor Robert A. Farrell, Mayor Pro-tem Jim Thomas, and Commissioners Ken Byrd, Wilma Laney, Joe Dannelley, and Elease Goodwin. Staff members in attendance were Fire Chief Phillip Richardson, Interim Public Works Director Joe Wood, Town Clerk Regina Rosy, Police Chief Carl Colasacco, Planning Director Justin Westbrook, Finance Officer Beth Wentland, Parks & Recreation Director Adam Crocker, Public Works Director Harold Watts, and Town Manager Paul Sabiston. Reporter for the Pilot Laura Douglass was also in attendance for the meeting.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Farrell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Budget Sessions

Manager Sabiston stated this past year a lot has been accomplished across the departments, and it's been a really busy year.

a. 9:10 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. – Administration/Finance/HR/IT

Manager Sabiston stated there have been more key retirements in 2018 and restructuring in several departments. The new Tyler financial system transition is complete. Manager Sabiston stated the FEMA projects are still underway – staff believes the dam project will probably be completed by the fall due to all of the rain. More ordinance/policy revisions and updates completed including the Comp Plan, UDO - preliminary, Town Code - building requirements for water/sewer; SDF study completed and new rates established. Manager Sabiston stated Planning Director Westbrook will be presenting a timeline of revisions to the UDO to the Board at the next meeting.

Manager Sabiston stated performance measurement tools have been established for each department and we now have about 12-14 months of

data. A new budget format with Tyler will be used for FY 19/20 and Finance Officer Wentland provided a brief overview of the new format. Manager Sabiston stated a new IT position and an Administrative Assistant (shared between Administration and Planning) was established this past year. Improvements at Fire Station #2 continue which includes the UNC Air Care helicopter service and additional living space.

Manager Sabiston stated he will continue to assist all departments with developing clear department goals, specific objectives, detailed strategies, and practical performance indicators. Manager Sabiston stated a lot of progress has been made in these areas. Manager Sabiston stated the upcoming year goals for Admin/HR include HR enhancement training opportunities for staff, Town UDO reviews and updates, manage larger projects such as Police Department facility, school sewer line, financing efforts, tax changes, etc. Manager Sabiston stated Jen and Jamie are doing a great job with social media outlets and really increasing the presence for the Town which will be a continued effort to continue those successful efforts. Manager Sabiston stated he would also like to continue the citizens academy program this fall and make it an annual program.

Manager Sabiston reviewed short-term goals:

- Conduct a partial in-house pay study with some outside assistance.
- Create new employee programs with the assistance of primary/secondary benefit providers to better serve employees and to make information easily accessible.
- Complete financing options for large items such as new Police Department facility and other land/facility purchases.
- Consider hiring a consultant for assisting the Town in new financing options.
- Evaluate monthly departmental safety training units.
- Continue focus on friendly revisions to NCDOT plans for NC Highway 5, US 1/15-501 and the new school site on Hwy 5.

Manager Sabiston stated longer-term goals include the following:

- Continue to work on base Town “goals and objectives” that are longer-term in nature:
  - o Continue with the increased social media presence for all Town programs/services;
  - o Improve technology and savings in all departments for the individual benefit of the citizens and the Town;
  - o Increase available fund balance and retained earnings;
  - o Continue to improve employee wellness, safety, uniform evaluations, and self-improvements plans.
- Consider seeking national/regional certifications for police (CALEA), finance (GFOA), and fire departments;
- Continue to improve employee programs and benefits to maintain top workforce;
- Implement capital maintenance plans for Town facilities.

Manager Sabiston discussed the capital improvement plan for Administration which included the following items:

- o Security System for main Town Hall/Finance Building (FY 18/19 - \$12,000, and FY 19/20 as needed);
- o \$600,000 for property acquisition in the upcoming year which could potentially involve the elementary school that will go up for sale in the next fiscal year;
- o Fibernet installation at \$8,000 plus a new monthly amount – in discussions currently with Conterra;
- o Other major projects include Police Facility (\$4.2 million) and new park land (\$100,000);
- o Schedule other needed IT improvements to portions of our computer system (\$30,000 - \$40,000 over next 4-5 fiscal years).

Manager Sabiston stated the projected increase for health insurance for employees is expected to be between 3-4%, Worker's Comp and Property/Liability Insurance increases are unknown at this point. The Local Governmental Employees Retirement System rates are set to increase for General Employees from 7.86% to 8.95% and Law Enforcement employees will increase from 8.5% to 9.7%.

Manager Sabiston reviewed the facilities Capital Improvement Plan. Manager Sabiston stated the Wholesale Grocery Building lease is not in a good state currently – the lease is for \$1,760 per year and repairs to the building are not being taken care of by the tenant. Manager Sabiston stated the Town is in a lose-lose situation with this lease. Manager Sabiston stated the AA Building is in good shape and the tenant understands the responsibility to take care of the building. Manager Sabiston reviewed financing considerations for FY 19/20: Police Facility at \$4,200,000 (15-20 years), schools - \$600,000 - \$800,000 (15-20 years), Park land acquisition - \$100,000 - \$175,000 (15-20 years), annual financing for vehicles - \$300,000 - \$400,000 (4-5 years). Manager Sabiston stated Aberdeen currently has zero rectangular fields for recreation purposes, and an opportunity has presented itself for the Town to get a great deal on a tract of land at the corner of Pee Dee Road and 15/501. Manager Sabiston stated AC Sandhills and the Boys & Girls Club are interested in partnering for acquisition of the property. Total financing for FY 19/20 of \$5,200,000 to \$5,575,000 would equal a new annual debt service of \$456,000 per year. Manager Sabiston stated the present tax rate is \$0.47 per \$100 of valuation, with a possible new tax rate of \$0.50 per \$100 valuation (including new valuation through the County), which could create a net increase in tax revenue of \$461,073.

Manager Sabiston reviewed the water and sewer capacity/use as follows:

- Water Capacity – 2.0 MGD
- Water use – 0.734 MGD
- Water available – 1.270 MGD

- Sewer capacity – countywide – 10 MGD, Town – 1.5 MGD
- Sewer use – 0.734 MGD
- Sewer Available - 0.770 MGD

b. 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. – Public Works & Water/Sewer

Public Works Director Watts reviewed a summary of the past year for the Streets and Sanitation Departments:

- Purchased a new garbage truck to add to the fleet, and sold the oldest truck in the garbage fleet;
- Purchased concrete blocks to create the soil/material containment system for Public Works facility;
- Constructed a ramp and contracted with Waste Industries to handle street sweeping debris;
- Working through rapidly changing recycling environment and price increases for disposal;
- Redefined dilapidated ditch system along Glendale Drive and Canna Place;
- Resurfaced 4,172 linear feet of Town streets.

Public Works Director Watts stated there was a spike in 2018 for the budget history for the Sanitation Dept. due to the purchase of a garbage truck.

Director Watts stated goals for the upcoming year include the following:

- Continue to collect and analyze performance indicators which directly measure the effectiveness and performance for Public Works functions;
- Execute core Town services ensuring they support departmental goals and verifying that they are nested in Board’s adopted goals and objectives;
- Improve employee performance through empowerment and positive leadership training;

- Resolve and stabilize recycling costs;
- Continue to look for professional development opportunities for departmental staff;
- Continuously update safety operating procedures for all Public Works departments;
- Develop a road-side ditch maintenance program to ensure ditches are functioning properly;
- Continue to map areas around the Town that the department mows and maintains;
- Research and develop a vehicle rotation plan to mitigate high maintenance costs of larger vehicles.

Director Watts stated due to the age of the fleet and the high costs of repairs that increase yearly, it is being requested that one of the oldest garbage trucks be replaced. Other capital improvement requests include the purchase of two bobcat mowers, a hydraulic compactor attachment, a hydra tilt bucket attachment, and road resurfacing.

Director Watts discussed the water and sewer capacity in further detail. Director Watts stated there are no concerns of capacity for water or sewer.

Director Watts stated for the AMR system, phase I will be completed by the end of this year, phase II will be completed next fiscal year, and then the final third phase will be completed in FY 20/21. Customers will be able to log in to their accounts and see their metrics for their account. Customers will also know when there is a leak for their account and they will be notified by text and/or email. Manager Sabiston asked which area of Town will be completed in each of the phases. Director Watts stated Forest Hills, Shepherds Trial, Woodgreen, Legacy Lakes, Sandy Springs, and Route 12 have all been completed. Director Watts stated all new building that is taking place has the new AMR system. Director Watts stated the goal would be to finish the AMR system, and then transition to an AMI system so there does not even have to be a drive-by for meter reading. Commissioner Dannelley asked if the Town will go to monthly billing once the AMR system is complete.

Director Watts stated conversations have been had around that – and that is the plan to go to monthly billing once the project is at least halfway complete. Director Watts stated there has been a reduction in unaccounted for water usage.

Director Watts stated in addition to completing 1/3 of the AMR system this year, other accomplishments include:

- Construction of Well #28 is expected to be completed by summer;
- Completed the conversion from an air bubbler system to a more conventional float system at Lift Station 7;
- Purchased 2" flushing hydrants to allow the flushing of 2" dead end water mains where we had the inability to do this in the past.

Director Watts stated this year the items requested for Water & Sewer for Capital Improvement include a portable generator to provide reliable water and sewer services, 1/3 of AMR project, mini excavator, and a V Cam lateral camera system to replace the current broken camera.

Director Watts stated additional topics for consideration for FY 19/20 include the following:

- Amend the sewer connection ordinance to address requests for alternate types of sewer systems like low pressure systems;
- Explore potential areas that we could possibly obtain additional water supplies;
- Implement an inspection list for newly built homes before issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.

c. 10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. – Planning

Director Westbrook stated a summary of the past year for Planning & Inspections includes the following:

- Improvements to planted areas in downtown have already taken place and we can expect those to continue;
- Comprehensive Land Development Plan adoption;

- Steady Permitting activities;
- Measuring performance in several areas to track performance;
- Downtown is happening;
- Downtown Aberdeen Advisory Board creation.

Director Westbrook stated short-term goals for the department include:

- Revise entire UDO in areas that need amendment;
- Create aggressive work plan for Landscape Planner for a visible difference in the Downtown area and around gateway signs;
- Planning for Spring Spree and Sunday Exchange Concert series with the objective of location and/or improvements to a permanent facility;
- Begin work on wall mural for Downtown;
- Coordinate with Public Works, NCDOT and contractors for implementation of downtown paving projects;
- Spark rehab projects in Downtown through more aggressive promotion of Façade Grant Program;
- New, semi-permanent stage and cover for Sunday Exchange and other events.

Director Westbrook stated long-term goals include:

- Downtown Master Plan Implementation (Phase 2 and beyond);
- Pedestrian Plan update to focus on sidewalks, street crossings, and greenways that connect to adjacent jurisdictions;
- Continuation of multi-phase projects such as Poplar Street sidewalks.

Director Westbrook reviewed the following capital improvement plan items proposed for FY 19/20:

- US 1 Crossing – Town match of \$20,000;



- NCDOT STIP Project for sidewalk along Johnson Street - \$5,000;
- South Street improvements - \$50,000;
- Pedestrian railroad crossing improvements at South and Main Streets - \$15,000;
- Poplar Street sidewalks Phase from US 1 to Johnson Street - \$18,750;
- Poplar Street Improvements – Phase 2 (stormwater management) - \$12,000 for engineering.

Commissioner Dannelley asked if minutes are generated from the TRC meetings. Director Westbrook stated no, minutes are not taken for those meetings since they are mostly only attended by staff members.

Director Westbrook stated he would expect to have the UDO revisions complete in 6 months.

d. 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. – Lunch

e. 12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Police

Chief Colasacco stated the Town hired ADW architect for design of the new Police Department facility and building plans are being reviewed for the project. Chief Colasacco stated he is working on more community-based projects by officer initiation. Chief Colasacco stated incidents are up, offenses are up, arrests are the highest for the past five years, and citations and warnings are almost the same as last year.

Commissioner Dannelley asked where most of the crime is attributed to – local residents or people passing through. Chief Colasacco stated most of the recent crime is people from out of the area. Chief Colasacco stated most of the efforts in the police department budget are to make sure officers are equipped with the equipment they need to do their jobs safely and retain staff.

Chief Colasacco stated right now in the current police station the CALEA process can not really continue until the building project moves forward. Commissioner Byrd asked about a police cadet program. Chief Colasacco stated he has been in contact with some different groups and that

is an item on his to do list is to re-instate a police cadet program. Chief Colasacco stated he is interested in reinstating the physical agility program for police officers so that he can help provide motivation for good physical fitness.

Chief Colasacco stated goals achieved this past year include:

- Completed the transition for take-home vehicles;
- Replaced all hand guns so officers are equipped with the same weapon, qualification scores improved;
- Retained quality officers;
- Communicated well with the public;
- Obtained monetary incentive for detectives.

Chief Colasacco stated short-term goals for the upcoming year include:

- Continue working with new building construction;
- Build community-based projects;
- Partner with the Academy of Moore County and work on a SRO position;
- Continue to reach out to the sick and elderly and see the program grow;
- Strive to keep response times low as call volumes increase.

Chief Colasacco stated long-term goals include:

- Have new/renovated Police Department construction started in next 12-18 months with completion 18-20 months from start;
- Continue adding an officer to maintain with population to stay proactive not reactive;
- Look at phasing body cameras into patrol.

Chief Colasacco stated he is requesting three marked vehicles in the upcoming budget to replace the last of the chargers. He is also requesting one unmarked vehicle to replace the 2005 Chevrolet truck that is currently the Chief's vehicle. Chief Colasacco stated other capital items requested in

the upcoming budget are portable/AED batteries (\$2,500), guns (\$700), CSI equipment (\$3,000), swivel holsters (\$2,800), five patrol vests (\$3,600), four SRT vests (\$7,200), and outer vest carriers (\$2,520).

Chief Colasacco stressed the importance of really thinking through if we might want to add back in dispatch at the Aberdeen Police Department – for better security and service to the citizens of Aberdeen.

f. 1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. – Parks & Recreation

Director Crocker stated over the past year the following items have been accomplished at Parks & Recreation:

- Constructed new stage at Malcolm Blue Farm. The Blues and Brews event on April 13<sup>th</sup> will be the first time using the new stage;
- Began outdoor electrical overhaul at Malcolm Blue Farm;
- Director Crocker stated the engineer inspections and reports on Malcolm Blue Farmhouse and Grist Mill are completed;
- Contracted new vendor to keep fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July;
- Continued to increase programming, athletic participation, and rentals.

Director Crocker stated \$7,200 - \$20,000 is the bid for contracted maintenance work at Malcolm Blue Farm. The bid would include maintenance work twice a month for eight months out of the year. Director Crocker stated other increases to the budget for the upcoming year include a volleyball structure, increased charge to rent vans from Rent A Wreck for summer camp program, porta johns for special events, and uniforms for program participants. Director Crocker stated the good news is the increased participation will also increase revenues for the department.

Commissioner Byrd asked what kind of feedback is received from the flyers that go out to the schools. Director Crocker stated the feedback from the guide is very strong and very positive. Director Crocker stated a lot of people go to social media sources, but the guide is extremely helpful in getting the information out to the public.

Adult athletics – not getting very far with that. Might try a cornhole tournament with a DJ and the Railhouse on site to see if that might generate some participation.

Director Crocker reviewed the short-term goals for the department which included the following:

- Improve drainage and grounds conditions at Aberdeen Lake Park;
- Improve ground coverage at Ray's Mill Park;
- Contract quality, consistent grounds maintenance for Malcolm Blue Farm;
- Increase adult athletic offerings;
- Evaluate parking options / improve drainage at Sharpe Park;
- Seek more park property/facilities.

Director Crocker reviewed the long-term goals for the department which include the following:

- Improve drainage and grounds conditions on Colonial Heights ballfields;
- Seek more park property/facilities;
- Continue to evaluate facilities at the Malcolm Blue Farm;
- Improve grounds at Aberdeen Lake Park;
- Improve and expand amenities at Ray's Mill Park.

Director Crocker reviewed the capital improvement plan which consisted of the following:

- Aberdeen Lake Park (\$50,500) – improve drainage around playground and shelter, eliminate flooding in playground, install irrigation, and establish more consistent ground cover;
- Ray's Mill Park (\$22,000) – sod and seed park, establish appropriate ground coverage, install irrigation, slow erosion/improve drainage.

Commissioner Dannelley asked about the house at Ray's Mills Park and when it can be removed. Director Crocker felt it would be achievable to have the house removed in about 3 months.

BREAK - 1:45 p.m. – 1:55 p.m.

g. 1:55 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. – Fire

Chief Richardson stated successes over the past year include lowering the ISO rating to a 3, improvements in UNC Air Care operation in the area, and awaiting Storm Ready Certification. Chief Richardson stated challenges included less volunteer participation, personnel shortages, multiple calls at once, and maintaining response times.

Chief Richardson stated short-term goals for the upcoming year include the following:

- Lower ISO – again;
- Maintain staffing level;
- Increase inspection and preplans;
- Cultivate new volunteer program;
- Maintain capital improvement replacement plan.

Chief Richardson stated long-term goals for the upcoming year include the following:

- Developing staffing and response from multi-stations;
- Development of a succession plan;
- Reduce/maintain response times.

Chief Richardson stated capital improvement requests for the upcoming year include:

- Replacement of Engine 421 (pumper/tanker - \$600,000);
- Add an Operations Chief to help with day to day work;
- Upgrades to Station 2 (hanger, additional living quarters, etc.).

Commissioner Dannelley asked about the ambulance service – Chief Richardson distributed a report that showed only 4 medical calls were ran over the past year with the ambulance and he can't justify spending \$150,000 for a new ambulance. But he would like to continue the ambulance service since it is a community outreach effort for being available at Pinecrest High School games, etc.

h. 2:40 p.m. – 3:10 p.m. – Conclusions, Review Budget Calendar & Next Steps

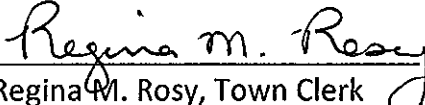
Manager Sabiston stated he would like to get some feedback from the Board about priorities for the budget, and take a hard look at revenues and tax rates to figure out how to pay for these things. The first true budget work session will be held at the April Work Session. At that point the budget will be in draft form for the Board to review. Manager Sabiston stated this might be a year where an additional meeting might need to be scheduled to review the capital items. Commissioner Dannelley stated what the Manager proposed is a unique strategy which the Town has never used – hire someone who really has a broad picture of financing strategies and how to get at it. Commissioner Dannelley stated if this is done correctly, the Town could really benefit from this strategy and how quick we can get at it.


A motion was made by Commissioner Byrd, seconded by Commissioner Goodwin, to authorize the Town Manager to hire the financial advisor and get him on board. Motion unanimously carried 5-0. Manager Sabiston stated he will schedule a more specialized meeting to talk about debt in April, but the regular Budget Work Session will be April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Farrell encouraged everyone to vote on the Town's website for the school naming.

3. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tem Thomas, seconded by Commissioner Goodwin, to adjourn the meeting. Motion unanimously carried 5-0.

  
Regina M. Rosy, Town Clerk

  
Robert A. Farrell, Mayor

Minutes were completed in  
Draft form on March 15, 2019

Minutes were approved  
on March 25, 2019