

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 25, 2021**

**This meeting was conducted electronically pursuant to Governor Carney's State of
Emergency declaration, effective March 13, 2020, as amended.**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Saxton called the February 25, 2021, Town Council Budget Workshop Meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Mayor Saxton, Councilmembers Derek Abbott, Randy Bartholomew, Sue Callaway, Dick Oliver, Carol Stevenson, Frank Weisgerber; Town Manager Maureen Hartman; Finance Director Renee McDorman; and Administrative Specialist Janet Powell. Councilman Oliver left the meeting at 3:25 pm.

Discussion and Possible Action on FEMA Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

Councilman Bartholomew gave a brief history specifically relating to the homes directly on the coast.

- In 2005, maps reflected the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) at 12'.
- In 2014, the homes east of Ocean Drive increased to 13'
- In 2014, Sandpiper Village was reduced to 10' matching neighboring Middlesex Beach (map was repealed in 2020).
- In January 2020, the BFE went back to 12' resulting from an appeal.

Based upon prior data and correspondence from FEMA and neighboring area BFE's, the AD Hoc Committee concluded:

- beach front homes including Sandpiper Village should be at the 10', not the proposed 12" BFE
- call to FEMA with follow-up questions and possibly hold a public meeting for FEMA to present their conclusions followed by a Q&A session
- retain an engineer to review the FEMA materials to determine if there is support for an appeal to move to a 10' BFE level
- hire a consultant and if supported by the consultant's and engineer's result findings; appeal the LOMR on behalf of the ocean front houses

Mayor Saxton mentioned that the Town previously paid \$25,000 to a consultant with the conclusion that to win an Appeal was a 50/50 chance at best. He mentioned the Town Council had decided not to appeal the LOMR new map for the West side of town (that increased around 1 foot) and wanted to get a feel from Town Council members if they wanted to review the Ad Hoc Committees conclusions and possibly appeal the LOMR map on the east side of town.

Town Council members unanimously agreed not to spend any additional monies on an appeal on the LOMR map. Mayor Saxton suggested the Town provide the coastal homes any FEMA literature, letters, and documentation to the homeowners.

FY2022 Draft Budget Review

Councilman Bartholomew presented the FY 2022 Draft budget with the assistance of the Finance Director and Town Manager.

Councilman Bartholomew noted that the FY 2022 Proposed Operating Budget is a balanced budget; total revenue and total expenses both equal \$2,541,407. The four major revenues are: property taxes, rental taxes, transfer taxes and building permits represent 85% of the total revenue; a 2.3% increase over the 2021 fiscal year budget. The overall total revenue growth of FY 2022 over the FY 2021 budget is .5% increase.

Of the four major revenues, the property taxes were slightly higher, rental taxes were consistent, and building permits had a \$4,000 increase. It was noted that the FY 2022 Proposed budget for building permits is a moderate increase. The Finance Director explained due to the supply and demand of building material and the increase costs in material, there is consideration this will cause the building trend to decrease. The most note-worthy category is the transfer tax; with a 185% yearly increase from the FY 2021 budget to the FY 2021 actual. The FY 2022 proposal stays at a moderate amount to stay consistent with the average analysis.

Overall, the FY 2022 proposed budget has a modest increase. There was discussion about the \$2400 budgeted for the Beach Patrol's 50th anniversary celebration. The Town Manager stated that Capt. Dacey was not sure if a town-wide celebration would occur because of COVID. If not, that money can be reallocated.

Councilwoman Callaway, from the Community Enhancement Committee (CEC), presented four new proposed new events: Flags for Heroes, Bike Repair Station, Bocce Ball Court and Pickleball Court. 1) Flags for Heroes includes the installation of small American flags in ground sockets during the holidays; Memorial Day, 4th July, Labor Day and "Seize the Day" celebrating American Vets. Suggested areas of cluster placement includes Anchorage Forebay area and the landscape area in front of York Beach Mall. Mayor Saxton suggested contacting DeIDOT regarding the right-of-way. 2) Bike Repair Station includes the installation of a DERO bike repair station at either York Road or the Anchorage Forebay area. The station includes all the tools necessary to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance from changing a flat tire to adjusting brakes, etc. The bike repair station would be placed on a permanent concrete pad. Mayor Saxton again suggested DeIDOT would need to be contacted regarding the consideration of the placement. 3) The proposed bocce ball court would be installed in the area across from the fitness area and behind the park bench in the park. The court is self-contained, minimum staff attention, low maintenance, and people would bring their own bocce balls. Councilman Bartholomew, on behalf of the of the Budget and Finance Committee, commented the park area gathers quite a bit of water, had concerns with ongoing maintenance costs and keeping the surface in tack, noise level and use of the park in general. Councilman Stevenson felt any loud noise could be contained by the police. Councilman Abbott stated it was low maintenance and a nice project for the community. Mayor Saxton's main concern of the location in the park. The Mayor felt that Town Council had an obligation to the residents on Russell Road and Evergreen Road (Middlesex residents). Communities are encouraged to keep and preserve open space and the Mayor wants to secure the wooded park. A suggestion was to have another survey regarding the park land use. 4) Create a 30x60 pickleball court with painted lines only and a mobile net in the employee parking lot located to the left of Town Hall with use restricted to after office hours and weekends unless otherwise decided. Logistics regarding where to store the net and associated equipment is up for discussion. Councilman Bartholomew, on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee, had concerns that it is an active employee parking lot with some employees working late or weekends, and noise control to the homes across from the court. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that the employees would have to move their vehicles or park elsewhere. Councilman Abbott suggested to keep it in the budget until further research and discussion. It was agreed all CEC projects would remain in the budget however no monies would be spent without Town Council approval.

Councilwoman Stevenson stated the Public Relations Committee (PRC) will have a town float in the Bethany Beach 4th July parade at this time. There will be one movie night, a bonfire, caroling and other social initiatives.

Councilman Weisgerber stated the Canal Water Quality Committee (CWQC) expense dropped from FY 2021 Budget of \$10,000 to FY 2022 Proposed Budget of \$3500 for the cost to relocate and install the Ultimax air injection mixers from Petherton Canal end to the west end of Russell canal end to improve the dissolved oxygen and water movement/flow.

Councilman Bartholomew congratulated Town Manager Hartman and Finance Director McDorman for the lower trash rate during the contract negotiations with Republic Service reflecting in an overall 8% savings.

Councilman Bartholomew continued discussion and review of the ARM Reserves and stated the town is well funded for the Capital items. Town Manager Hartman requested that GMB review the condition of the town roads. It was recommended to crack seal and patch 53 roads in the Fall of 2021 with a cost estimate of \$112,000. \$125,000 should be sufficient with contingencies.

Town Manager Hartman provided a draft plan of renovations to Town Hall which will provide security to the staff, a public restroom, and better use of unused space in the current lobby. Town Manager Hartman stated that she has been working with Joe Hughes from Homeland Security and that a \$15,000 grant is available to the Town for security improvements. An additional \$25,000 grant could be available in January/February 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ed Bintz, 302 N Ocean Drive commented that the Ad Hoc FEMA Committee review was not fully accurate and had gaps in the facts and timelines. Mr. Bintz suggested the Ad Hoc FEMA Committee submit a memo with the full facts prior to the Town Council decision regarding FEMA. Mayor Saxton responded Councilman Bartholomew would take the responsibility.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Abbott, seconded by Councilmember Bartholomew, to adjourn the February 25, 2021, Council Budget Workshop Meeting at 5:15 p.m. Motion unanimously carried.