

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2021
3:00 P.M.**

**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 March 25, 2021, Town Council Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Mayor Saxton, Councilmembers Randy Bartholomew, Dick Oliver, Sue Callaway, and Carol Stevenson, Town Manager Maureen Hartman; Finance Director Renee McDorman; and Administrative Specialist Janet Powell. Chief Lovins; and councilmembers Frank Weisgerber and Derek Abbott participated virtually. Virtual participants - 10

REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE FY 2022 DRAFT BUDGET

Councilman Weisgerber discussed contracting with a new company this year, Solitude Lake Management, for canal maintenance and possible algae harvesting services. Councilman Weisgerber indicated that he and Town Manager Hartman are still working on the logistics of contracting Solitude to provide harvesting services for the canals, since the Town is responsible for finding a location to mobilize the harvester for a month, locating an area where spoils can be deposited and de-watered, finding an approved disposal site, and determining who will conduct all groundwork labor. The Town Manager stated she is currently working with DNREC and has reached out to them for input and direction. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the appropriate amount of funds to budget, considering there is a \$17,500 lease charge for mobilization of the harvester from Connecticut to Delaware for one month plus \$1,500/day of operation with Solitude's crew. This fee does not include groundwork or disposal and the daily operation fee is subjective dependent on the amount of time the Solitude crew will be utilized in the month. The Town Manager suggested a 'Not to Exceed' clause. Mayor Saxton requested Councilman Bartholomew meet with the Town Manager and Finance Director to see if funding can be determined for approximately \$30,000.00.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS

Town Manager Hartman indicated that Homeland Security submitted a second grant in the amount of \$25,000. Along with the first grant for \$15,000 there is the potential for \$40,000 for town hall security improvements. There was a discussion about the cost estimates for three different phases of renovation that included 1) entrance renovation totaling \$147,447; 2) rear addition totaling \$98,435; and 3) the entire project totaling \$281,883. The Mayor questioned the 20% contingency costs. Lauren Wandel, from GMB Engineers explained the 20% contingency cost is quoted high to allow additional possible costs; shortage of construction material has driven higher prices, contractors' costs, selecting higher end items, etc. Councilwoman Callaway suggested removing the front of the "storefront" design and provide walls with windows that match the existing design of Town Hall. Ms. Wandel stated that she will provide a second front design to replicate the existing Town Hall for a comparison to the existing design. Councilwoman Stevenson suggested demolishing one of the employee bathrooms and renovating the bathroom into an office for the Mayor. Ms. Wandel explained the current employee occupancy and bathroom are already non-compliant with today's building standards; and removing the existing bathroom to make an additional office along with the new renovations would make the entire building non-compliant. She noted the cost to demolish the bathroom to create an office will not be feasible and advised creating office space possibly in the back of Town Hall. Upon discussion, Town Council decided to utilize the chamber/storage addition to create a Mayor's office along with the chamber/storage. The Mayor

stated Town Council should have a better understanding of the modified (windows and mayor's office) renovation cost and the fiscal year capital budget (completed in April) for the next workshop meeting.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR THE FIVE-YEAR UPDATE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Councilman Oliver presented the Planning Commission's potential survey for the five-year update. Town Council felt there are several questions that are either obsolete or not land-use questions and should be eliminated. Councilman Oliver reminded everyone that this is not a town survey, but a five-year update survey of the Comprehensive Plan. He will submit an open/ended question regarding possible use of the wooded area (triangle) at Town Hall to the Planning Commission. Councilman Abbott suggested submitting all feedback to Councilman Oliver, so Councilman Oliver can forward the edits to the Planning Commission to revise.

DISCUSSION TO APPOINT A NEW MEMBER TO FEMA AD HOC COMMITTEE

Tabled until the April 9 Town Council Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nina Link, 114 Elizabeth Way, stated she is opposed to developing the wooded area stating there is value in natural, open, wooded spaces and one of the unique values of South Bethany is that the Town is not overly developed. Ms. Link noted there is currently no park and it has not stopped the sales of properties in Town. Ms. Link asked if Town Council will be creating a vote on streetlights, because she has discussed the issue with several people on Elizabeth Way and they are opposed to streetlights. The Mayor commented the wooded area will be a possible open/ended question in the survey to see how the community stands and there is no discussion of a street light vote at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilman Abbott, seconded by Councilman Oliver, to adjourn the March 25, 2021, Council Budget Workshop at 5:04 p.m. Motion unanimously carried.