

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 24, 2022
3:00 P.M.**

Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Saxton called the February 24, 2022 Town Council Budget Workshop Meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Announcement of Attendance and Absences

In attendance were Mayor Saxton, Councilmembers Derek Abbott, Randall Bartholomew, Sue Callaway, Edie Dondero, and Tim Shaw, Town Manager Maureen Hartman, Administrative Specialist Janet Powell, and Finance Director Renee McDorman. Councilman Oliver had an excused absence. Public attendance 0. Virtual attendance 7.

Discussion and possible action to award Bid No. 22-04 Beach Walkways

Town Manager Hartman received bids from AJT Homes for \$167,540, Aquatic Marine LLC for \$215,000 and JJID Inc for \$499,000 at the February 17, 2022 bid opening meeting for the final walkway locations at North 2nd, South 1st (emergency walkway), South 4th, Kewanee, and Logan Street. Town Manager Hartman recommended the award to Aquatic Marine, LLC in the amount of \$215,000 due to experience with beach walkway construction along the Delaware coast and in South Bethany and long-standing relationship and high level of understanding with DNREC regulations regarding beach construction. Motion by Councilman Abbott, seconded by Councilman Bartholomew to award Bid 22-04 to Aquatic Marine, LLC. Motion carried 6-0. Mayor Saxton commented after the motion that the Beach Walkway project is to be completed by the end of May.

FY2023 Draft Budget Review, with discussion and possible action on a line item proposed for the FY 2023 budget

Councilman Bartholomew presented the FY2023 Draft budget with the assistance of the Finance Director McDorman and Town Manager Hartman. He stated there is a balanced budget with total expenses and revenues equaling \$2,656,898.00 representing a 4.5% growth over the previous year and noted the four core revenue drivers are property tax, rental tax, building permits, and transfer taxes equaling 71% of the total.

Councilman Bartholomew reviewed the G&A expenses with a 4.8% overall increase and Town Manager Hartman explained two new expenses: a Town Council stipend of \$50 per meeting (22) totaling \$1100 per official, noting if passed in the budget an Ordinance will need to be created in Town Code; and \$5,000 for the Board of Adjustment to cover the costs of legal counsel and administrative expenses to avoid raising the Town fee schedule.

Councilman Bartholomew stated the Dept of Public Safety budget has a 6% merit increase along with promotional bonuses embedded, and the reallocation of overtime. Chief Lovins noted the department has been short one officer since July 2021 and some of the budget salary money was dispersed as overtime to make up for that position. Councilwoman Callaway suggested offering a sign-on bonus for a new applicant or bonuses to the existing officers for remaining with the department. Mayor Saxton stated he and Councilman Bartholomew have had multiple conversations with the Chief to make sure the department is adequately taken care of and recommended the Chief use the salary budget as he sees fit; and if he needs to disperse bonuses that is his discretion and does not have to report back to the Council.

Finance Director McDorman noted the Beach Patrol budget had an increase in overtime due to being short staffed in 2022 and Captain Dacey filling several positions. Mayor Saxton questioned if the BP salaries are competitive compared to the BP in the Delaware state parks. Ms. McDorman noted the salaries are competitive, but housing costs, as well as ability to find housing, is a huge problem for guards. Councilwoman Callaway stated the Jr. Lifeguard program is a very successful program but had limited days due to lack of staff. Mayor Saxton recommended the budget be reviewed again to increase the BP salary to provide adequate staff including staff for the Jr. Lifeguard program.

Councilman Abbott left the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

Councilwoman Dondero noted several new activities in the Public Relations Committee budget: Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety event, Coffee & Conversation Events, Family Night Beach Party/Bonfire in the summer, Community Bonfire in the fall and a Tree Lighting event.

Councilman Bartholomew noted the Zero Turn mower, and the plow for the PW truck are in the ARM Replacement Reserves and the allocations of other reserves including Town Hall renovations, beach ramps and the MSA project will be confirmed at the March 11, 2022 TC meeting.

Public Comment

There is no public comment.

Adjournment

Motion by Councilwoman Callaway, seconded by Councilman Bartholomew, to adjourn the February 24, 2022 Town Council Workshop meeting at 3:54 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.