

**TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
November 14, 2024, 8:30am**

Attendance

The following Committee Members were in attendance in person, Treasurer and B&F Chair, Randy Bartholomew, Tim Saxton, Steve Farrow, Russell Beland, and Director Renee McDorman. Rich Juliano and Simon Moore attended online. The Town Manager, Maureen Hartman and Don Boteler had excused absences.

Approval of November 14, 2024, Minutes

The Committee unanimously approved September 25, 2024, minutes.

FY 25 Mid-year Budget/Financial Report Review

The committee reviewed the FY 25 October mid-year financials. The committee noted that revenues for rental tax and grants had increased since the last finance committee meeting. Members agreed the town was still in good financial standing and are hopeful revenue streams will remain consistent.

FY 26 Budget Schedule

The Treasurer and Finance Director explained the upcoming budget process and timeline. The Treasurer explained the first step was for all departments, Town Council members and Town Council chairperson liaisons to submit their fiscal funding requests to the Town Manager and Finance Director. Once everything has been submitted, the Finance Director compiles all requests and presents first to the Finance Committee and then to the Town Council. The Finance Committee may make recommendations to the Town Council, but the Town Council has the final approval at the March Town Council meeting.

Operations/Resiliency Funding

The Treasurer discussed the challenges for the upcoming fiscal year operational, Capital and infrastructure funding. He explained with the upcoming new tax assessments being released by Sussex County there may be a need for the Town to reassess the current tax rate. The Town will need to determine which scenario will work best for property tax revenues. The Town could either use the current assessments for this tax year or begin using the new assessments and adjust the tax rate appropriately for a tax revenue increase or remain tax neutral. Some individuals that have received the new Sussex County assessments have indicated that the new values are more in alignment with actual property values. The determination will be made once the assessments have been received from the county. The committee also discussed possible annual property tax increases to avoid making a one-time substantial tax rate increase. All agreed to a more gradual increase methodology. A suggestion was made to research the feasibility of obtaining a bond to fund large upcoming projects.

Public Comment

Public comments included the need not set tax assessment revenue in stone until Sussex County has completed the tax assessment process and that the Town will need to have a special assessment to meet future funding requirements.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 am.