

MINUTES

**Town of Weaverville
State of North Carolina**

**Town Council Workshop
Tuesday, May 14, 2024**

The Town Council for the Town of Weaverville held the Public Hearing and Budget Workshop on May 14, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room at Weaverville Fire Department, 3 Monticello Road, Weaverville, N.C.

Councilmembers present: Mayor Patrick Fitzsimmons, Vice Mayor Catherine Cordell and Council members Doug Jackson, John Chase, Michele Wood, Peter McGuire and Dee Lawrence.

Staff members present: Town Manager Selena Coffey, Town Attorney Jennifer Jackson, Finance Director Tonya Dozier, Planning Director James Eller, Town Clerk Tamara Mercer, Police Chief Somer Oberlin, Fire Chief Scottie Harris, Public Works Director Dale Pennell, Water Plant Supervisor Randall Wilson.

1. Call to Order Mayor Fitzsimmons

Mayor Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Public Hearing on Proposed FY 2024-2025 Annual Budget

A. Overview of the proposed fiscal year 2024-2025 Annual Budget

Town Manager Coffey provided an overview of the proposed fiscal year 2024-2025 Annual Budget to Town Council. Ms. Coffey noted pursuant to NC General Statutes §159-11 Fiscal Control Act the proposed annual budget shall include the Budget Message, the proposed budget is available on-line via the Town's website and a printed copy is available at Town Hall, and the Town is holding the public hearing. Public Hearing requirements are met pursuant to General Statute §159-12 for advertisement. She reviewed the Town Manager's Budget Message and Executive Summary and highlighted the economic outlook and budgetary goals. This review included area demographics for population and development growth, property tax revenue estimates, and details about the Enhanced Budget.

Manager Coffey stressed that the property tax rate is to remain at the current .35 cents per \$100 valuation but noted an increase in fire tax and the water rate increase per the report in the rate structure study. Forecasts included the Local Sales Tax and interest rate income, fees and fund balance charts were provided in the presentation.

There are proposed new staff positions for an Assistant Public Works Director for a portion of the year, and three fire fighter trainee positions in the Fire Department for a partial year, funded by the fire district rate increase. There is a 6% Health Insurance cost increase.

Enhanced budget items, items that could be added, were reviewed by Manager Coffey.

B. Public Comment and Input on Proposed Budget

Mr. Bo Platt of Preston Court in Weaverville said he is a new resident and is happy with quality of services in the town. Mr. Platt said he participates in and learns about the town through the Citizens Academy, and he is in favor of town programs and supports Staff receiving a Cost-of-Living Adjustment to maintain the quality of life in Weaverville.

Ms. Darla Letourneau of Lakeshore Drive agreed with Mr. Platt. She supports the employees, and to continue community services encouraged fully funding the COLA and merit pay due to inflation and as proposed by the manager.

3. Town Council Discussion and Budget Input

There was discussion regarding the Enhanced Budget, staffing positions, the new parking lot at Public Works, parking at Lake Louise, and the Public Works Grapple Truck. There was general consensus to support the Grapple truck with knuckleboom loader using additional funds per the Finance Director Dozier's explanation on the fund balance. There was general consensus from Town Council to remain at the 40% target fund balance, Ms. Dozier reiterated that Town Council could authorize a lower target for fund balance.

Manager Coffey reviewed grant funding for the Active Weaverville Plan. The Active Weaverville Committee is expected to ask for a half-million dollars.

In response to Council member Chase's questions regarding the Police Department electric charging stations, further grants and matching grant funding was noted by Manager Coffey. Chief Oberlin and Officer Burrell answered functionality questions on the Police Department electric vehicle charging station system. Mayor Fitzsimmons said that Duke Energy has a lease program which Chief Oberlin confirmed, and agreed with Mayor Fitzsimmons that the department will need to add fast charging stations if they continue towards an all-electric fleet.

Council member Wood stated she was in favor of a 5% COLA for all personnel. Mayor Fitzsimmons reiterated his belief that a merit based system is better.

In response to Vice Mayor Cordell's question about the market adjustment last year, Manager Coffey replied that not all employees received the market adjustment last year.

B. Mayor Fitzsimmons reopened the Public Hearing per request from a citizen

Mr. Brent Koenig of Coleman Street arrived late to the meeting and asked to provide input on the budget. Without objection he was allowed to provide comment.


Mr. Koenig said the town's population is expected to increase dramatically. He was concerned with the lack of funding for sidewalks. He is in favor of expanding and improving sidewalk safety, addressing increased traffic, and purchasing land for future parks. Mr. Koenig suggested a park be located on the north side of town. He requested Council to consider the value of more parks and sidewalks.

Manger Coffey added that the next Budget workshop is scheduled for June 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in Town Council Chambers, Town Hall.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business and without objection, Mayor Fitzsimmons adjourned the workshop at 6:33 p.m.

ATTEST:



Tamara Mercer