



Town Council Regular Workshop Minutes for March 09, 2026

Budget Workshop #1

The Town Council regularly scheduled workshop was held on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall, 30 S. Main Street, Weaverville, N.C.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Gary "Dee" Lawrence called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Town Council Present: Gary "Dee" Lawrence, Peter McGuire, Jennifer Young, Phil Barnett, Mark Endries, and Andrew Nagle. Absent: John Chase

Staff Present- Town Manager Scottie Harris, Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Jackson, Finance Director Tonya Dozier, Planning Director James Eller, Public Works Director Angela Reece, Assistant Public Works Director Eric Cutshall, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Randall Wilson, Town Clerk Tamara Mercer, Planner Graham Crawford, Community Center Manager Mike DeSerio, Police Chief Somer Oberlin, Interim Fire Chief Ken Briscoe, PW Supervisor David Fisher, and A/V Coordinator Lauren Ward.

2. Pre-Budget Overview

Town Manager Harris reviewed pre-budget information with Town Council. Manager Harris noted that due to a delay from Buncombe County, the ad valorem revenue projections are not yet available. Harris indicated that he hoped to present that information at the March 23, 2026, Town Council meeting:

Presentation topics included:

- Budget Officer's statutory responsibility;
- current conditions and projections;
- buildings, infrastructure, and call service levels;
- current staffing levels and personnel growth by development;
- examples of supply chain, equipment delays, and entry level training timing;
- current and projected housing and population numbers;
- possible needed personnel growth by department;
- strategies to meet service delivery expectations with reduced financial impact;
- staffing level comparison among are jurisdictions;
- FY27 requested capital projects, equipment, and personnel;
- Town Manager focus areas; and
- Strategic Plan alignment.

Councilmember Nagle requested 2015 data on trends and population numbers.

3. Town Council Preliminary Input on Budget

It was noted that there will be a business personal property tax loss of about \$150,000 when ThermoFisher closes and there are virtually no costs to the town for services for that business. Other businesses have a much higher need for Town services, such as Walmart.

The impact of Maple Trace subdivision being annexed was discussed from a property tax revenue standpoint and from a water revenue perspective. It was noted that the Water Fund is a public enterprise fund and is separate from the General Fund.

Manager Harris explained that the approved COLA for last year was implemented with the same amount going to all employees and not a percentage increase to all salaries and noted that if continued it could lead to compression.

4. DISCUSSION & DIRECTION - Public Input on Budget

Councilmembers Nagle and McGuire said they were in favor of merit increase and expressed support of merit and retention-based raises and market hiring ranges in order to retain employees. Nagle indicated that he is opposed to cost-of-living adjustments (COLA). Councilmember McGuire noted that the hiring range within the pay plan needs to be examined for retention purposes and that raises may need to be implemented to keep in line with the market. He noted that salary increases also bind the Town for the future.

There was discussion on increasing public input opportunities during the budget deliberation process. It was noted that Town Manager Harris held a 'Community Conversations' session last month and the next one could focus on budget. There was general consensus to include public input during the upcoming Town Council budget sessions and for budget agenda items during regular meetings.

Mayor Lawrence invited the public in attendance to provide input.

Darla Letourneau, a Weaverville resident, recommended that the budget presentation be given to the public in order to educate the citizens and be geared towards understanding program costs in order to receive meaningful public engagement comments. She suggested utilizing bonds for big capital project items.

Jeff McKenna, a Weaverville resident, agreed with Ms. Letourneau and suggested using last year's budget as an example and tool to educate the public.

No one else elected to speak.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business and without objection, Mayor Lawrence adjourned the workshop at 7:55 p.m.



Mayor



Town Clerk