

**MINUTES OF A COUNCIL RETREAT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF TARBORO, HELD AT 8:30 A.M. ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2016 AT THE FOUNTAINS OF THE ALBEMARLE IN TARBORO, NC**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rick Page	Mayor
C.B. Brown	Councilman
Steve Burnette	Councilman
Deborah Jordan	Councilmember
Taro Knight	Councilman
Garland Shephard	Councilman
Leo Taylor	Councilman
Othar Woodard	Councilman

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Jenkins	Councilman
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ALSO PRESENT

M. Alan Thornton	Town Manager
Leslie Lunsford	Town Clerk
Frankie Winslow	Fire Chief
Buddy Harrison	Electric Department Director
Travis Stigge	Recreation Department Director
Troy Lewis	Public Works Director
Damon Williams	Police Chief
Anne Mann	Finance Director
Catherine Grimm	Planning Director

Mayor Page welcomed Council and staff to the annual Council Retreat.

Alan Thornton, Town Manager, gave a Retreat overview and reviewed Retreat objectives.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

Department Heads presented reports to Council and answered questions. A copy of all reports are filed in the Town Clerks office at Town Hall.

**Finance – Anne Mann**

Anne Mann reviewed the Town’s Financial Summary, explained each fund and answered questions regarding the financial report information. She gave Council an update on the Finance Department and staff. Anne Mann also discussed the new Town Website proposed to launch in late Spring, updated financial policies and IT & Network Security. Anne informed Council she was currently reviewing three Audit Firms and would submit a recommendation at the March Council Meeting. Anne also discussed the possibility of entering into a contract with Mark III Brokerage, Inc. as the employee benefits broker. Mark III would act as a broker for employee insurance programs, coordinate the Section 125 program and would keep the Town in compliance with ever-changing government regulations such as HIPPA, ACA and ERISA. Councilman Woodard made a motion, which was seconded by Councilman Taylor and passed unanimously, that Council enter into the contract with Mark III Brokerage, Inc. effective immediately.

**Power Services – R.L. Willoughby**

R. L. Willoughby presented an update on the Electric Cost of Service Study. Mr. Willoughby presented Council with several options. Councilman Knight made a motion, which was seconded by Councilman Shephard and passed unanimously, that Council pass a 9% decrease along to customers across the board effective as soon as possible.

**Electric Department – Buddy Harrison**

Buddy Harrison presented the Electric Department report and answered questions. He also addressed aging equipment and transformers, converting all street lights over to LED, the great need for a tree trimming crew and updated Council on the Smart Grid pilot program that they will start to install in May. Buddy requested Council reinstate a car allowance for the Electric Utility Director position. Councilman Shephard made a motion, which was seconded by Councilman Woodard and passed unanimously, that Council agree to reinstate the car allowance effective July 1, 2016. Buddy also expressed the need for employee pay raises, stating he has lost two employees this year to a smaller surrounding town.

**Public Works – Troy Lewis**

Troy Lewis presented Public Works Departmental report and answered questions. He discussed the Water/Sewer Cost of Services Study and possible water & sewer rate increases, Capital Outlay needs and updated Council on several completed projects in the Public Works Department.

Retreat was recessed at 4:30 pm.

Retreat resumed on Sunday February 21, 2016 at 9:00 am.

**Planning Department – Catherine Grimm**

Catherine Grimm presented the Planning Department report and answered questions. She expressed the need for additional staff in the Planning Department, such as a Downtown Development Manager. Council discussed the need and the duties of the position. Catherine informed Council that the Town was currently applying for Certified Local Government Status which would allow for increased grant eligibility. Council expressed concerns for all areas of Town, not just the Downtown area. Catherine updated Council on completed and future projects.

**Police Department – Damon Williams**

Chief Damon Williams presented the Police Department report and answered questions. The Chief discussed the need to upgrade the communication system following the recent radio system failure. He also recommended changes in the Departmental structure.

**Fire Department – Frankie Winslow**

Chief Frankie Winslow presented the Fire Department report and answered questions. He updated Council on current and future projects and employee training. The Chief also requested funding in the FY 2016-2017 budget for a new Fire Pumper truck.

**Recreation Department – Travis Stigge**

Travis Stigge presented the Recreation Department report and answered questions. He highlighted programs at all recreation locations and explained departmental challenges, goals, accomplishments and needs. Travis informed Council that he was currently looking into computer software that would assist in sport registration, mass communication and other areas of the Recreation Department. Council questioned the status of the grant the Town is no longer receiving, Travis stated that he was working with staff to decide which grant to apply for, State or National. Councilman Burnette made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Jordan and passed unanimously, that Council direct staff to apply for the National level grant as soon as possible.

**MAYOR**

Mayor Page addressed concerns about the merit pay increase for above standard evaluations not being implemented as of July 1, 2015. Councilman Knight made a motion, which was seconded by Councilman Burnette and passed unanimously, that Council authorize the Finance Officer to give employees with an above standard evaluation the 1.25% pay increase retroactive to the evaluation date. The Mayor also questioned how employees earned and used comp time versus overtime. Anne Mann informed Council that the state law would be changing in the near future that would affect “non-exempt” employees. This change would require the Town to pay employees overtime instead of comp time.

Mayor Page suggested Council establish a three member board to conduct exit interviews with Town employees to determine the cause of departing employees. Councilman Burnette made a motion, which was seconded by Councilman Shephard and passed unanimously, that Council appoint Councilmembers Taylor and Woodard and the Mayor to serve on the exit interview board.

**COUNCILMEMBERS**

Councilman Knight – None

Councilmember Jordan – None

Councilman Brown – asked about lower level employee pay increases. The Town Manager informed Council that the recent Pay Study addressed all positions and would hopefully be presented in March. Councilman Brown also requested Councilmembers refrain from attacking other Councilmembers during meetings.

Councilman Burnette – encouraged Town to work to retain current employees.

Councilman Shephard – requested Department Heads include departmental employee chart in budget. Councilman Shephard also requested Council consider reinstating the policy for retired Electric Department Director, Rick Page’s health insurance premiums. He asked that the Town pay Rick Page instead of paying his insurance. Councilman Knight asked that staff provide figures at the March meeting. Councilmember Jordan asked that all retired Town employees be offered the same option.

Councilman Taylor – asked if the Town had a formal grievance policy. He was informed that there was a policy that included supervisors, Department Heads and the Town Manager.

Councilman Woodard – asked that the Mayor maintain order in the Council meetings. He also stated that he did not agree with Council voting to reinstate a car allowance for the Electric Director at the Retreat.

**Closed Session - GS 143-318.11(a)(6)**

Councilman Knight made a motion, which was seconded by Councilman Shephard and passed unanimously, that Council enter into Closed Session.

Councilman Knight made a motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Jordan and passed unanimously, that Council resume regular session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Jordan made a motion, which was seconded by Councilman Brown and passed unanimously, that the meeting be adjourned.

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Mayor Pro Tem

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Leslie Lunsford, Town Clerk