

THE ERWIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BUDGET WORKSHOP

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021 @ 1 P.M.

ERWIN COMMUNITY BUILDING

AGENDA

1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**
 - a. INVOCATION
 - b. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

3. **DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED FY 2021-2022 BUDGET**

4. **DISCUSSION OF CURRENT FY 2020-2021 BUDGET**

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

ERWIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**BUDGET RETREAT MINUTES****MARCH 25, 2021****ERWIN, NORTH CAROLINA**

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Erwin with Mayor Patsy Carson presiding held its Annual Planning Retreat in the Erwin Community Building on Thursday, March 25, 2021, at 1:00 P.M. in Erwin, North Carolina.

Board Members present were: Mayor Patsy Carson and Commissioners Randy Baker, William Turnage, Ricky Blackmon, Alvester McKoy, and Melinda Alvarado.

Board Members absent were: Commissioner Thurman Whitman

Town Manager Snow Bowden, Town Clerk Lauren Evans, Finance Director Linda Williams, Recreation Director Doug Stevens, Police Chief Jonathan Johnson, and Public Works Director Mark Byrd were present.

Mayor Patsy Carson called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

Commissioner Baker gave the Invocation.

Police Chief Jonathan Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

DEPARTMENTAL CAPITAL REQUEST

Below are the requests from each Department for the upcoming 2021-2022 fiscal year.

PARKS AND RECREATION---DOUG STEVENS

Requested to replace the roof on the Erwin Gym. The roof is leaking and has not been replaced since the late 1980s. Three companies bid on the roofing contract. NKS, located in Erwin, was the lowest bidder at \$40,850. The metal roofing will carry a 20-year warranty.

Requested to incorporate a cut and dry invoice for rental fees. There are a lot of travel teams and tournaments that play on our fields on the weekends. He provided an example invoice and stated

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the set amount of invoices would increase our revenue. Their past invoices range from about \$1,000-\$1,600. These set invoices would increase our income to about \$300-\$500 per tournament depending on how many teams play which would help replenish things that get worn out over the weekend. This way, we have a set fee and the tournament director would be in charge of everything else.

Town Manager Snow Bowden informed the Board that utilities went up this year due to the new splash pad.

Discussion continued in regards to the Rail Trail maintenance.

POLICE DEPT---JONATHAN JOHNSON

Town Manager Snow Bowden informed the Board about a lease program, Enterprise Fleet Management, which many of our local municipalities use to lease their police vehicles. We would pay a monthly fee and then after four years, Enterprise sales the car for us. One thing that is hurting this budget is that we need police cars. He and Chief Johnson met with Benjamin Krautheimer to discuss the program. Mr. Krautheimer stated he would be happy to come to meet with the Board and present the idea in person.

Request to update (3) of the patrol vehicles. He stated that they depend on Mr. Byrd's guys about every other day to assist with car repairs. In the last three years, they have gone over their budget for car repairs. The cars have less than 100,000 miles but they have a lot of idling hours which in turn causes internal engine issues.

Request to raise starting pay for new Officers. Raising the base pay may help Erwin maintain and keep Officers.

Request to add (1) investigator position. Erwin currently only has one investigator and he fears that the problems in Dunn with gangs and drugs are starting to trickle into Erwin. An additional investigator position would help combat that and he would work closely with Lieutenant Ennis on-call situations. One investigator cannot focus on his current caseload as well as narcotics and gangs. He feels it would be important for this year and in the future.

The consensus of the Board is that each Department's Budget should include putting money away each year and planning for this. They agreed that a five-year plan to replace the three vehicles and replace one vehicle a year after that would be best.

Commissioner Blackmon stated this is a capital purchase so why not pull it out of fund balance, it is a one-time purchase that you won't ever purchase again. The Board needs to come up with some type of policy on the replacement time and what that value would be in the future.

Commissioner Baker asked about the COVID funding for the Police Department.

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Town Manager Snow Bowden stated our auditors came and they completed the audit but we are still waiting on them to finalize it. Some of the funds were realized for wages in the previous fiscal year so we are waiting to see what we need to do with these funds. We got all of the money this fiscal year but a good chunk of it was for the previous fiscal year.

Discussion continued.

Commissioner Alvarado stated she would like to see our SRO do some summer programs, have her do some crime prevention things especially with the youth being out of school.

Commissioner Blackmon asked about grants available to Law Enforcement.

Chief Johnson stated he will look into it.

Discussion continued between the Board.

Commissioner Alvarado asked if the laptops for the cars are included in the proposal.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated the proposed budget is for three cars without laptops. He would like to talk about purchasing laptops with this fiscal year's budget to ease the burden of costs. This year is going to be another tight budget year.

PUBLIC WORKS---MARK BYRD

Mr. Byrd stated the leaf truck is in Dunn getting a new motor put in it. The limb truck had a motor put in it about 2 years ago. He requested extra money for the maintenance of the equipment, other than that, his budget is the same as the previous year.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated we are going to be able to save our residents some money with Sanitation. Waste industries lowered their price for pick up as the Board is aware. A big impact of COVID on the Public Works Department is picking up limbs and picking up everything people were doing with spring cleaning. They are still in the budget but one line being over in this proposal is under sanitation for Landfill Tipping Fees. He stated he did budget for them to get more funding this year because he felt people will continue to do projects around their homes.

Commissioner Alvarado stated she was impressed with the guy who picked up the limbs. He got out with a rake and made sure he got all the limbs and she really appreciated that.

Commissioner Baker stated Mr. Byrd has three employees and his budget is made up of four departments. He inquired about the maintenance person marked out in the proposed budget. Marking out this worker would be a deduction in personnel for your department. He asked Mr. Byrd if he needs that position to be filled to complete the duties he is asked to perform.

Mr. Byrd stated they do need that position.

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Commissioner Blackmon then asked why the position has been cut.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated he cut the position in the proposal to balance the budget but he wants to give that position back once we meet and have a discussion. The retirement rates are going up and he estimated a 10% increase in health insurance for all employees. It may be closer to 5% but it is better to estimate high. Once that money frees up, that position can be a top priority.

Commissioner Blackmon stated he knows we used to, but we need to look into doing our own fuel again.

Mr. Byrd states we saved a lot of money by doing that.

Commissioner Blackmon asked Manager Snow Bowden to look into the cost and the process. There would be an upfront cost but it may save us money in the future.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

After some discussion, the consensus of the Board was to instruct Town Manager Snow Bowden to contact South Eastern for an estimate to renovate the bathrooms and a fully functioning kitchen without changing the footprint of the building. Improvement to the water and sewer will also be done when renovating the building. The Board agreed if the Community Building is renovated then the fee should reflect the building being rented and a Town Employee should be present while the event is taking place to ensure things are being held accountable.

STORMWATER

Commissioner Baker stated he mentioned to Town Engineer, Bill Dreitzler, about our Ordinance requiring people who have ditches and stormwater devices located on their property to keep those clean. He expressed concern about what we are doing as a Town for our right of way and ditches. He asked Mr. Byrd where we are at with addressing our storm waters. He had a gentleman approach him stating that he pays a stormwater fee and wanted to know what the Town is doing to manage the ditches.

Mr. Byrd stated he understands but the fees the citizens are being charged do not justify the cost to have Ray Johnson come out and start digging ditches. We are talking about thousands of dollars. He has talked to some contractors but it is hard to get them over there to get it done. Public Works does not have the manpower to do it themselves.

Commissioner Baker recognized that Mr. Byrd does not have the staff or equipment to do the job. He stated that is why we wanted to pose the question to see where we are in the process.

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Town Manager Snow Bowden stated right now it has been impossible to get anyone to come out. We plan to have Stewart Group look at the issue on St Matthews and a part of East Erwin as well.

Commissioner Baker stated storm waters are a major problem when it rains but you address those issues when it is not raining. He asked how we plan to fix it. From Mr. Byrd's point of view, we are understaffed or underequipped. It is unfair to expect Mr. Byrd to perform a duty that is beyond his capabilities. He stated he wanted to look at the depth of the problem.

Mr. Byrd confirmed they are unstaffed and underequipped to do what is being asked. They can clean out a ditch in front of someone's house but not beyond that. We have to start outside and work our way into Erwin.

The Board continued to discuss stormwater issues around Town.

Commissioner Baker stated we can only do so much with the money we generate from it but we cannot ask a homeowner to keep their ditches clean on their property if we are not making an effort to keep our ditches clean of debris as well. He stated we can divide the Town into quadrants and start at Black River and in a few years we will have went through Town and would be back to Black River. The Board needs to set a policy to address these problems.

PLANNING/CODE ENFORCEMENT

Requested (1) full-time Planner / Code Enforcement Officer. A higher salary may be needed.

Town Manager Snow Bowden informed the Board of the upcoming changes for the 160D to be discussed at our May Board Meeting.

The Board discussed the need for an updated Land Use Plan in the next few years. Our current Land Use Plan was established in 2014.

The consensus of the Board was to allow Town Manager Snow Bowden to prepare a job description and salary for a full-time Code Enforcement Officer position.

LIBRARY

Library Director, Kimberly Vanbeck, was unable to attend the Retreat.

Requested Part-time help.

Commissioner Alvarado stated she felt we cannot justify Part-time work but recommended Ms. Vanbeck reaching out for volunteer help. She knows plenty of retired people and teachers

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during the summer who would love to come help. She felt providing funds for the Summer Reading Program is important.

ERWIN DEPOT

The Board discussed the cost to fix up the Erwin Depot and options for how the Town can fund the project as well as ongoing operational expenses. The Consensus of the Board was to instruct Town Manager Snow Bowden to investigate what the rates are going to be and what financing is available to the Town.

Commissioner Turnage asked that we plan to present a Plaque to our Citizen of the Month from last year, Ms. Regina Wood, at one of our upcoming Board Meetings.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Town Manager Snow Bowden informed the Board about the updates to the American Rescue Plan signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021. The Town of Erwin is estimated to receive \$1,510,000. The first payment will be \$755,000 on 6/15/2021. No guidelines have been given, at this time, to determine how the money can be spent. Infrastructure improvements may be included. He strongly recommended that once we received the guideline from the US Treasury Department, that we stick to it. These funds will need to be placed in an account, separate from General Funds, and will be audited.

Discussion continued between the Board.

PERSONEL POLICY AMENDMENT

The Board discussed providing Town Staff with additional annual leave. The Board decided to award three days of Funeral Leave for an immediate family death and sixteen hours of personal leave which cannot be combined with any other leave. Both leave policies will not rollover.

Mayor Carson left the meeting at 4:43 PM.

Commissioner Turnage left the meeting at 4:48 PM.

Commissioner Alvarado left the meeting at 4:54 PM.

The Board discussed considering, if the Budget allows, awarding all Town Staff with an Employee Appreciation Bonus at the end of the Fiscal Year.

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CURRENT FISCAL YEAR

Town Manager Snow Bowden updated the Board with a brief overview. Sales Tax and Property Tax are doing well. One thing that may need to be adjusted is our Quarterly Taxes.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Blackmon made a motion to adjourn at 5:10 PM and was seconded by Commissioner McKoy.

**MINUTES RECORDED AND TYPED BY
LAUREN EVANS TOWN CLERK**



Patsy Carson

Mayor

ATTEST:



Lauren Evans

Town Clerk