

**THE ERWIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**BUDGET DISCUSSION**  
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2023 @ 9 A.M.**  
**ERWIN MUNICIPAL BUILDING BOARD ROOM**

**AGENDA**

- 1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**
  - a. INVOCATION**
  - b. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 3. DISCUSSION OF GOALS FOR FY 2023-2024 BUDGET**
- 4. ADJOURNMENT**

**ERWIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**BUDGET DISCUSSION MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 16, 2023**  
**ERWIN, NORTH CAROLINA**

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Erwin with Mayor Randy Baker presiding held its first Budget Discussion for FY 2023-2024 in the Erwin Municipal Building Board Room on Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 9:00 A.M. in Erwin, North Carolina.

Board Members present were: Mayor Randy Baker, Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Blackmon, and Commissioners Charles Byrd, Alvester McKoy, and David Nelson.

Board Members absent were: Commissioners William Turnage and Timothy Marbell.

Town Manager Snow Bowden, Town Clerk Lauren Evans, and Finance Director Linda Williams were present.

Mayor Baker called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Commissioner Nelson gave the invocation.

Town Clerk Lauren Evans led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Nelson. **The Board voted unanimously.**

Mayor Baker asked everyone to keep Commissioner Turnage in their thoughts and prayers.

*Commissioner McKoy arrived at 9:10 A.M.*

**DISCUSSION OF GOALS FOR FY 2023-2024 BUDGET**

Mayor Baker stated we wanted to all come together and talk about our goals for 2023-2024, look back on the past fiscal year to see what we did right and what we did wrong, and how we can improve. This session will also give staff direction to prepare for our initial retreat and the upcoming budget.

Town Manager Snow Bowden presented the Board with lists on the Board Room wall.

- I. Accomplishments so far in FY 22-23:
  - LED Sign
  - New Website
  - Asphalted the parking lot and second entrance to Al Woodall Park
  - Hired a Code Enforcement Officer
  - Hired two Investigators for Erwin PD
  - Upgrades to the clock tower Downtown

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2023**

- Library Consolidation with Harnett County
  - Approved a PUD of 204 Single Family Homes and 43 Townhomes which will be Annexed into the Town in 2023.
  - New Equipment such as Street Sweeper and Limb Truck (Leaf Truck is still being made)
  - CERRI
  - Increased employee pay by 8% since last year
- II. Wishes:
- Sidewalks (Bike Ped Grant, potential)
  - Paid Time Off for staff (Additional Holiday or Birthday off)
  - 421 Overlay
  - WIFI Downtown
- III. Needs:
- Ipads or Tablets
  - ADA Transition Plan
  - Cameras (Internet needed, hopeful with Cloud Wyze it will be possible)
  - More funds for Code Enforcement
  - Back access to Field 4 (He had identified a property that needs to be condemned, 813 S 13<sup>th</sup> Street)
  - Radios for Erwin PD
  - Hire a Full Time Planner
  - Support Erwin Businesses/Chamber still
  - Consider Mill Redevelopment.
  - Managing Growth
- IV. Short Term Goals:
- Update Wayfinding Signs
  - Potential Rebranding and Marketing Plan
  - Update UDO
  - Complete Recommendations for CERRI Report
  - Increase Employee Pay
  - CORE Recommendations
  - Improve existing facilities
  - Employee Recruitment and Retention
  - Recruitment for PD (Possibly pay recruits to go to BLET)
  - Personnel Updates
  - A separate line item for Community Events such as the Remembrance Service
  - Misc Projects to give to Senator Burgin or Representative Penny
  - Park Improvements at Al Woodall and Porter Park

Mayor Baker stated the House has control over the funds for the upcoming year. The Board needs to identify our top three line items for the Town of Erwin so that we can request funding from the State Legislature for the upcoming year. He asked the Board to think about what else can be added to Town Manager Snow Bowden's lists. He stated the elephant in the room is the Depot. We as a Board have a

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2023**

decision to make. There are various feelings on opposite sides but this can had been kicked down the road too long and the Town is responsible to do something about it. If the Board chooses to move forward with the process, we need to establish goals and timelines and hold ourselves accountable.

The Board took a walk and continued the discussion at the Parcel located behind the Fire Department to look at the parcel and the Depot sitting on it.

Mayor Randy stated he hoped seeing the Depot put it in a new light for every member of the Board because it did him. The Town has \$300,000 tied up in that project. Money has been given from private individuals to go towards that project and the Town has requested and obtained funds from the State for that project. He stated he wanted to hear from Commissioner Blackmon and his expertise first knowing the architectural design.

Commissioner Blackmon stated some of it can be salvaged, we already have the footprint. The question that has to be answered is how much it will cost to have new plans drawn up and everything else done vs the cost of what we already have. It is possible that they can take the plans we have, redesign them, and it not cost that much. The electric, heat, and air are not going to change that much. Grade the foundation, get the water out, and keep the foundation, doors, and girder. He recommended changing exterior walls and adding a metal roof. We need to get up with the company who made the plans, it is just four walls. A third or fourth of the building can be saved.

Commissioner Byrd recommended finding companies or individuals to donate parts of the building and have a sign that says what was donated and by whom.

Mayor Baker stated people are going to see what is on the exterior. This project will potentially be a new building to replicate the design, it will not be a restructure. He stated he wanted a takeaway before leaving the meeting and instruction for Town Manager Snow Bowden. He asked if it was the consensus of the Board to take the economic project of not just that building but an Economic Downtown for the Town of Erwin that would consist of a structure similar to our Depot. We can have a rendering done to show what the vision of the Town of Erwin is in moving that square forward.

Commissioner Byrd stated he completely agreed. He mentioned that incorporating train cars for restaurants and shops would be an awesome idea.

Commissioner Nelson stated he fully supported the project as long as the Town can find grants or other funding to do it.

Mayor Baker stated we have to come up with plans and show our vision so that we can carry that to our State Representatives for funding. We will not get enough to pay for all of it but on the finance side, we have the library coming off of the budget in the next few years. This will not be complete within the year but we have to look at our financial strategies as well.

Commissioner Byrd stated that the lot could be utilized for wedding venues. You cannot find a wedding venue for cheaper than \$4,000-\$5,000. It can produce revenue.

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2023**

Commissioner Blackmon stated we already have \$204,000 in the Community Enhancement Fund, which is a quarter of the way. If we are going to do this project, we need to put it under Parks and Recreation because we can have people there with set hours.

Mayor Baker stated using the front part for a parking area would be an extension of Downtown with a strip mall and business offices. We have no more room to grow Downtown.

The Consensus of the Board was to reach out to the company to have new plans drawn up, if the company is unreachable then find another company. The Board set a goal of 6 months to have architectural designs.

Commissioner Blackmon recommended using this year's cell tower lease money to fund the designs and meet with different architectural firms. He would like to meet with architects that specialize in historical structures. He still thinks we can put a small theater in the building as well.

Discussion continued among the Board.

Each Board Member went around and expressed their goals and wishes for the New Fiscal Year.

Commissioner Byrd stated cameras are important and we have needed them for a long time. Cameras help us keep an eye on our community. His wishes were anything to make the Town more appealing such as sidewalks. He thought the WIFI was great but he expressed his concern about the Company coming through the Town right now. He was hopeful that it would provide us with what we needed. We really need to fix the drainage issues in Town, the ditches are getting bigger, deeper, and wider. The worst one is where the bank fell in at Porter Park. It is really dangerous. He stated our voices as a Board is going to need to get louder regarding the State Maintained Roads. The road issues in front of Porter Park and front of the Short Stop were dangerous. The biggest thing on his agenda was to clean up Erwin. We have a good start with hiring our Code Enforcement Officer. The Harnett County School Board needs to fix the ditch behind Erwin Elementary School. He was pro iPads rather than the paper agenda. He inquired about the 421 overlays and wanted to look into relocating Public Works in preparation for potential commercial businesses. He wanted to see cameras and iPads in the current budget.

Commissioner Blackmon stated he thinks everyone has the same goals. He would love to have a robocall system set up when things happen in Erwin, such as a waterline breaking, so that we can get information out to our citizens. He wanted to see cameras installed on the Rail Trail. We need someone that can do inspections, either the new Code Enforcement Officer could do inspections or we could hire someone who's retired and could work part-time. He wanted to go back and look at bringing garbage pickup back in house and owning our own cans again.

Mayor Baker stated we could look into leasing trash trucks vs. buying trash trucks. Bringing it back in-house would increase our level of services.

Commissioner Blackmon stated he would like to see the Town obtain more land at Parks and Recreation.

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2023**

Mayor Baker stated from a budgetary standpoint, we need to allocate \$50,000 for park expansion.

Commissioner Blackmon stated he would like to see the Town partnering with the Erwin Area Chamber of Commerce to host a 4<sup>th</sup> of July Event. He stated if the Board is willing to move forward with bringing on the nine full-time firefighters as Full Time Town Employees, he needed to know for budgetary reasons. The Town will not pay a dime, the Fire Department will cover everything.

Commissioner Nelson stated he wanted to see Town employees receive a 5% raise. He stated we need to check on signs around Town. We need to contact DOT to get another "No 18-wheeler" sign on Old Post Road. He would love to see a new gym at Al Woodall Park.

Mayor Baker stated a new gym enhancement for our Parks and Recreation would be a great project to request from the State. He stated Storm Water needs to be addressed with the State as well. Security cameras could also be included in the enhancement of our Parks and Recreation.

Commissioner Nelson stated he would love to see a bigger gym in the future. We could offer indoor soccer if we had a bigger gym. DOT maintained and Town maintained roads are a mess. He also expressed the need for attracting restaurants to Town. There are a lot of yards in Erwin that are trashy and junky and we need to do something about it even if we need to update our Ordinances.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated that will be included in our updates to the UDO. We need to have a policy for frequent violators, more than three times per year then there will be no warning.

Commissioner McKoy stated he agreed with a lot that had been said and he did not want to be repetitive but we need to attend to the drainage issues in Town. We have valuable employees in Erwin and we need to take care of them. He knew Erwin is a small town but we need to be competitive and retain our employees or they are going to leave and go somewhere for better pay.

Mayor Baker stated he wanted us to have clear goals to carry to our representatives. We are looking at a Downtown Revitalization. Stormwater is another issue that we need to address through the DOT stormwater handle and the Town's response to stormwater. We need a stormwater assessment of the Town of Erwin to identify drainage ways and he was told we would be receiving a map that showed all of the drainages for the Town of Erwin. We were going to classify and code our different drainage systems. It goes hand in hand with our traffic. We need a traffic analysis on our Short Term List to help with the management of our roads. We need to look into requiring a Driveway Permit and how is that impacting our road systems.

Discussion continued among the Board.

The consensus of the Board was to only receive Financial Reports quarterly and monthly reports from Fire Inspections and Animal Control.

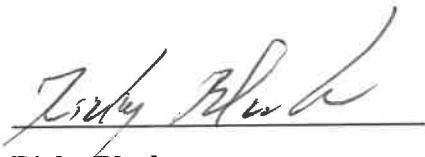
Mayor Baker stated he would like to have a Family Day for the families of Town employees and the Planning Board.

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2023**

**ADJOURNMENT**

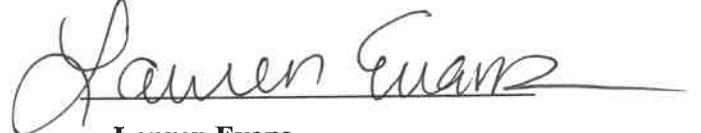
Commissioner Byrd made a motion to adjourn at 12:08 P.M. and was seconded by Commissioner Nelson. **The Board voted unanimously.**

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



**Ricky Blackmon  
Mayor Pro Tem**

**ATTEST:**



**Lauren Evans  
Town Clerk**