

**THE ERWIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**BUDGET WORKSHOP**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 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 PROPOSED FY 2023-2024 BUDGET**
- 4. DISCUSSION OF CURRENT FY 2022-2023 BUDGET**
- 5. ADJOURNMENT**

**ERWIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES**  
**MARCH 30, 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, March 30, 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, Timothy Marbell, and David Nelson.

Board Member absent was: Commissioner William Turnage.

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 McKoy gave the invocation.

Commissioner Nelson 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 Blackmon. **The Board voted unanimously.**

**DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED FY 2023-2024 BUDGET**

Town Manager Snow Bowden informed the Board that this Proposed Budget is a rough draft and he was looking for feedback and direction for moving forward. He stated Police Chief Jonathan Johnson has a project he would like to present to the Board that was requested after the preparation of the Proposed Budget.

**Police Department**

Police Chief Jonathan Johnson came forward and addressed the Board. He stated the idea was pitched by a couple of his officers the possibility of getting a K9 to help with drug enforcement and tracking suspects. Of course, money is a big issue and he informed his officers to approach businesses to see if any are willing to donate. The officers did a detailed search and he was looking for the blessing of the Board to continue approaching businesses and individuals and also look into grant opportunities totaling \$10,000 which would go a long way. He seeks advice from the Four Oaks Police Chief who went about getting their K9 through the same steps. K9s last about 6-8 years and Four Oaks has had great success with theirs. There is a new law that restricts a law enforcement officer from waiting on a K9 to arrive. Harnett County and Dunn loan us their K9 when needed but it would be nice to have our own. There is a company in Four Oaks that offers the K9, equipment for the K9, and training for the

### MINUTES CONTINUED FROM MARCH 30, 2023

K9 and Officer totaling \$17,500. There will then be an estimated annual amount of \$3,000 per year which covers dog food, vet visits, etc. We will also need to upfit our vehicle and that cost is estimated to be \$7,146. We currently have 26 businesses proposing to donate to the cause and 4 are waiting to hear back from corporate. One of our Investigators, Cody Norris has volunteered to keep the K9 and he lives in Erwin so his response time would be minimal.

Commissioner Blackmon stated a K9 would be great for Erwin.

Town Erwin informed the Board that funding for the K9 was not in the proposed budget. He stated we can create a fund.

**The consensus of the Board was to direct Town Manager Snow Bowden to include funds for the K9 in our 2023-2024 budget.**

*Chief Johnson left the meeting at 9:18 AM.*

### **Capital Purchases and Open Discussion**

Town Manager Snow Bowden informed the Board of the proposed 10% increase in the cost of health care and property and liability insurance. Also proposed a 7% increase in the fees for GFL based on their COLA from the Federal Government. His biggest concern was sales tax if the economy tanked but was currently at record levels. ARP was a good chunk of the budget. He stated the following items were included in the proposed budget:

- Funds for a full-time planner
- Upfit for one new vehicle, UTV, and ballistic shield for the Police Department
- New truck and new gator for the Recreation Department
- 2 Service Trucks for the Public Works Department
- Repurpose the old limb truck to use as a backup truck for Sanitation

Town Manager Snow Bowden proposed a 3% COLA for all full-time employees and a 3% merit raise after January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Nelson asked if we could offer a 5% COLA.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated he did not want to set the future Boards up to be at a crossroads figuring out how to pay for salaries. Property tax is pretty consistent but you just never know about sales tax. He would do his best to fit it into the budget but he felt very confident with the 3% COLA and 3% Merit which would be a 6% in the fiscal year.

Commissioner McKoy stated all Town Staff is essential to the Town and we need to do all we can to keep good people working for Erwin.

County Commissioner, William Morris, was present in the audience. He stated County is running into the issue of keeping employees. The County Board has concluded that employee retention is cheaper than employee recruitment. Before excusing himself from the meeting, he informed the Board that Harnett County will be funding new radios for all Police Departments in the county.

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM MARCH 30, 2023**

The Town Board asked County Commissioner Morris to pass along our sincere gratitude to the County Board.

Mayor Baker stated the Town needs to look into hiring a Building Inspector in the future budget.

Commissioner Blackmon stated the Board needed to only use ARP funds for capital purchases. We should not use it towards any reoccurring expenses. He stated if we truly need a Planner, then we need the position but he wanted to remind the Board that position will not bring in revenue but that is what you have to do if you want to provide that level of service to our citizens even if we have to increase the levy a penny or two to offset that cost.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated the proposed budget includes funds for a full-time planner and their benefit as well as \$50,000 to update our UDO.

The Board's consensus was to scale back on capital purchases and with the exception of the Planner position, not add any new positions to this fiscal year budget. They wanted to make taking care of our current employees a top priority. Town Manager Snow Bowden was instructed to see if he could make a 5% COLA and 5% Merit Raise after January 1<sup>st</sup> work in the Budget or at least a 5% COLA and 3% Merit Raise after January 1<sup>st</sup>. Increasing the salary for the Planner Position is needed in order to hire a qualified person.

The Board took a 10-minute break from 10:12-10:22 AM.

Town Manager Snow Bowden informed the Board that the Town planned to apply for the Golden Leaf Stormwater Planning Grant, we have also sent Representative Penny some budget requests for stormwater, parks, and downtown project. He knew everyone is waiting and wondering what is going to happen to the old business complex, as the new owners fix the building up hopefully it will bring in more property tax and help us grow as a Town. As HWY 421 develops, the more commercial businesses we can get, the more property tax we will get. We have a hopeful future in Erwin.

The Board discussed the potential for Erwin with the proposed HWY 421 overlay.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated the Powell Bill will stay the same with \$150,000.

Mayor Baker asked how long Cloudwyze anticipated renting that space from the Town.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated he would reach out to them to verify.

**Public Works**

Mayor Baker stated if we plan to relocate the Public Works building, we need to be serious about it and put within our long-term goals. If we don't plan to relocate the building, the fence has to be fixed. The building looks like the worst building in Town. We need designs if we plan to move forward with it and a feasibility study.

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM MARCH 30, 2023**

Commissioner Blackmon stated that staff needed to speak with an architectural firm that does Public Works type of buildings, send them an RFP out to see what they will charge, they will come in and do a feasibility study, they will come up with a draft of how much square footage is needed, and provide an estimated cost.

Commissioner Byrd stated if the Town plans to eventually bring trash pickup back in-house, we will need space for that as well.

Discussion continued among the Board.

Mayor Baker stated we wait for the study, if it comes back and the cost is out of our reach right now then we take the funding we have and invest in fixing the current Public Works facility to make it more secure and more presentable.

**The consensus of the Board was to put money in the budget for a Feasibility Study in the current budget year. Staff will prepare a Budget Amendment.**

**Parks and Recreation**

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated the biggest thing in Parks and Recreation, aside from capital purposes, is that we will have to replace all of the football helmets this year which will cost about \$8,000.

Commissioner Nelson stated Parks and Recreation needs a new gym.

Commissioner Blackmon asked if we ever spoke with the owners of the property so that we could gain access to Field 4.

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated he spoke with the owners and they are open to keep the conversation going. He did send a request to Representative Penny for funds for Park expansion. As for the new gym, he can look into doing another PARTF Grant for a new gym in the future. He did include funds to replace the roof of the current gym in the budget.

Mayor Baker stated we can replace the roof in the FY 2023-2024 budget and look at getting a new gym in 5-10 years.

Commissioner McKoy stated he would like to see a quote for replacing the concrete stairs at W.N. Porter Park.

Commissioner McKoy expressed his concern for children playing in the water in the ditch at W.N. Porter Park.

**The consensus of the Board was to place fencing on either side and put up a sign that says “No Trespassing” or “No fishing or swimming.”**

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM MARCH 30, 2023****Library**

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated this is the last year we will have to pay the County for the library. The only cost the Town will have will be general maintenance of the building and utilities. He stated we had some issues with the current budget not know what to budget for but we will be coming before the Board in the next month or so to get the current budget cleaned up. Angela is estimating a little over \$50,000.

Mayor Baker stated we need to increase funding for the maintenance of all of our buildings. Town Hall is in need of groundskeeping. If we take an interest in our own Town, maybe our citizens will do the same.

*Finance Director Lind Williams left the meeting at 10:56 AM.*

**Community Building**

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated he left the Community Building as is for now until June with we have a better idea of the cost and can make a decision on what we want to do with the grant. Once we renovate the building, we increase the rental price and bring in additional revenue.

**Discussion of Current 2022-2023 Budget**

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated revenues are higher than expected and expenditures are where they need to be. Other than the few issues with the library we need to address, we are in good shape.

Mayor Baker stated as for the Depot and the whole project area, we put in funding with the State but if the State does not come through, what is our plan? The process has got to start somewhere.

Commissioner Byrd stated he has been very vocal about it. He is 100% against rebuilding the depot. He is all for using salvageable components for something better.

Commissioner Nelson stated he would feel better if we put in a metal structure which would be cheaper for the taxpayers.

Commissioner Blackmon stated he did not think a metal building would be cheaper because you would have to tear down what is already there. We would be better off to use the existing foundation and build on it.

The Board agreed to use the existing foundation and build on it. Moving forward with the downtown project would be great for Erwin.

Mayor Baker informed the Board that he would like to have an Employee Appreciation Day for our employees and their family. We can get a food truck, ice cream, and some blow-ups for the kids. He would also like to see the Board accept a certification incentive policy. Our employees are our greatest asset and we need to do everything we can to show our appreciation for our employees.

**MINUTES CONTINUED FROM MARCH 30, 2023**

Town Manager Snow Bowden stated a Fourth of July event was mentioned at our last budget discussion but we do not have the funds to plan the event this fiscal year. He stated along with the Chamber, we will plan to have the event next year.

Discussion continued among the Board.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to adjourn at 11:35 A.M. and was seconded by Commissioner McKoy. **The Board voted unanimously.**

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

**ATTEST:**



**Ricky Blackmon  
Mayor Pro Tem**



**Lauren Evans  
Town Clerk**