

**TOWN OF TRYON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 31, 2020 12:00 P.M.
BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Present: Mayor J. Alan Peoples Mayor Pro Tem Chrelle Booker
Commissioners: Crys Armbrust, Bill Crowell, Bill Ingham
Staff Present: Town Manager Zach Ollis Town Clerk Susan Bell

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peoples called the budget work session to order.

Town Manager Ollis went over the revenues and expenditures. He is continuing to track them. He explained them to Chrelle since she was not able to attend the last meeting. Basically, the budget has been adjusted, because last year we had some things we were putting in at Town Hall, such as a new server, fire proof cabinets and software. This line item will be taken out.

Salaries-this budget includes a salary for the TDDA position. Part of General Fund and part out of Tourism. He is assuming once you start discussions with TDDA, hopefully they will put money towards this position also. Armbrust stated realistically he doesn't think they have the money. Ollis has expressed his concerns. The salary was calculated and included in line 93 along with benefits in lines 94,95,96. This position will report to the Town Manager. He wants to make sure the money is there and whatever you as a board decided, he will work with. That budget is fully funded by you and tourism. He is doing this to fill the position. TDDA cash flow shows their portion at \$4,000 a month. If we get the right person it will be worth it. He is going to New Bern in March to the Main Street Conference. This is the major change in admin.

Police is basically the same. Fire - the Lake Lanier tax revenue has gone up \$50,000. Harmon Field has gone up and doing well. You will notice in Tourism we have had to piece down the salaries to not have the transfers that we have had. This includes part of Meg's salary (10%), part of his (5%) and part of the TDDA position (10%).

Water/Sewer Distribution is \$279,000. We are removing some of the capital outlay. They have taken on salaries, because of the interfund expense. These are just preliminary numbers.

Sanitation last year you decided to take it to \$21. You might want to increase it this year.

Armbrust asked how we were doing on meter replacements. Ollis stated we had put in around \$90,000 worth of new meters since he has been here. Once we get the meters replaced you may want to look at replacing the registers. In replacing these meters, we are finding leaks that people didn't know they had.

On the second to last page it is the overall breakdown. You will see General Fund has \$25,000 left over. The audit fees are coming in and are not great. The lowest we have received shows an increase of \$18,000. That \$25,000 becomes \$7,000. If we can get a lower figure then he will.

Powell Bill - whatever is left over after the debt payment will be for Chestnut. He would like to get two roads done next year, but if we can't we can't. We have been through most of our Powell Bill funds, because we have been doing a lot of paving.

Fire Department has \$81,000, so they are doing very well. This is because of Chief Tennant. His first year, he did not take a salary. When he took over, he cut a lot of stuff that we didn't need. Armbrust asked where we were with regard to the repayment. This is probably the next to the last payment. He will have to look. It was setup on a five-year plan. Crowell verified the budget reflects the payment too. Ollis stated yes. Crowell stated they are doing good. Ollis asked them to go to line 225. Armbrust clarified there is one more to go. Ollis stated he will have to check to be sure.

Harmon Field will be \$31,000 to the good. This is due to the increase in tax revenue. Last year he built the budget before the tax increase was done and he didn't change it when the county gave the tax increase. They have made some improvements at Harmon Field due to this increase.

Tourism is ten in the hole. He may have to remove some of the salaries for him or Meg to make it work. He will have to look and see how the tourism tax goes. He is building on the current rate.

Water/Sewer - he has to find four dollars.

Sanitation is seven in the hole. We had to add salaries where we made changes to the transfers. We can improve the revenue stream. Crowell stated the fifty cents that we were talking about adding last year should cover that.

Ollis stated roughly General Fund is twenty-five percent of your budget. Fire Department is about eleven percent, Harmon Field is less than six, Tourism is less than one percent and Water/Sewer is forty percent of your budget. Sanitation is 6.10 percent. He is going to factor in the audit figures. It is basically divided in the funds.

He is going to have discussions with Jeff today about overtime. He is going to adjust salaries so that FICA/Medicare, 401k everything is based on overtime also. Armbrust asked what the chiefs anticipated date of retirement is. Ollis stated he should be eligible in five years. Mayor Peoples thought he would be eligible in about two years, because of the change that was made a few years ago. Ollis stated they reduced it to twenty-five but they were other changes also. He will look at the separation allowance also.

Crowell stated last year he thought we should go up on our tax rate. He would like to see five or six percent increase to put into our roads. Ingham stated he thought we would have a hard time passing that as long as we have vanity projects going on, such as the bridge and sidewalks. Crowell stated we have sidewalks that are falling apart. Our roads and streetlights are in disrepair. Ingham stated people inside the town pay double taxes. Crowell stated you get police coverage and other services. Peoples stated he is paying about the same tax as in 2011. He feels if we raise taxes then we should direct that money towards a specific project. Ollis stated Tryon is almost six cents below Saluda and four cents below the county. If you want to make your improvements you are going to have to look at an increase. Crowell just feels that it is time for an increase. Two for roads, two for sidewalks and two for general budget. Peoples doesn't want to see that much of an increase. He suggested a penny a year for the next three years. We didn't go revenue neutral and lost about four cents. Ollis stated yes and we are

still providing the same services. Crowell stated he doesn't want to fall behind or take it out of our fund balance. Ollis stated we went from a \$200,000 fund balance to a \$1.3 million in fund balance, took a tax decrease and still are providing the services. Ingham stated he doesn't see a tax increase while we are sitting on that much of a fund balance.

Commissioner Booker stated East Howard Street needs to be looked at. Morris-a lady in Saluda is using Morris to sell items. Ollis stated you as a board asked me to make up that form and no one has come in to fill it out. Peoples suggested \$100 a year to use Morris and the check goes to TDDA. Crowell suggesting using the money to repair Morris. In a few years he won't be there. Armbrust stated there is a fund for that. Bell stated about \$1,500 in that fund. Booker asked about the sexual harassment. Ollis stated everyone doesn't have email addresses and the company is waiting on us to get those or set it up to have everyone in the same room for training.

Armbrust asked if all employees and volunteers know what the RICO Act is. Ollis asked like racketeering charges. Armbrust stated it is related to racketeering, but his concern is complicity between divisions. He will get him the ordinance. He feels that personnel need to understand that. Ollis stated he feels that everyone pretty well understands racketeering. Armbrust wants everyone to understand it to protect us.

Ollis will look into to paving, Morris and sexual harassment. Booker doesn't know if Howard needs to be paved, but it needs to be looked at. Armbrust suggested sidewalks. Booker stated she doesn't know where we would put sidewalks without making portions of it a one-way street.

Cemetery lots and Bryan Park shelter were discussed. Ollis stated he was thinking about railing, bench and roses instead of replacing the shelter that was destroyed in the storm. Booker stated the Eastside Committee requested a bench.

Ingham stated at the county meeting the Polk County Appearance Committee will make a presentation to the Town for the cover on Rogers Park.

Mayor Peoples asked if there was anything else. Being nothing, he entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk