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**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE EMERALD ISLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2015 – 8:30 AM
TOWN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING CONFERENCE ROOM**

1. Call to Order

The Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners special meeting held in the Administration Building Conference Room was called to order at 8:30 am by Mayor Eddie Barber.

2. Roll Call

Present for the meeting: Mayor Eddie Barber, Commissioners Tom Hoover, Floyd Messer, Jim Normile, John Wootten, and Maripat Wright.

Others present: Town Manager Frank Rush, Finance Director Laura Rotchford, Town Clerk Rhonda Ferebee, Police Chief Jeff Waters, Fire Chief Bill Walker, Public Works Director Artie Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director Alesia Sanderson, and Interim Planning Director Jim Jennings.

Also present: EMS Chief Susan Walker, EI EMS, Inc.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Motion was made by Commissioner Messer to adopt the Agenda. The Board voted unanimously 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments by the public.

Financial / Budget Information

Town Manager Rush and Finance Director Rotchford discussed in detail with the Board all aspects of the following FY 15-16 budget information as outlined below. In addition, Department Heads were present to discuss and answer any questions pertaining to issues regarding their departments.

- 5. Overall Financial Status, Service Statistics**
- 6. FY 14-15 Budget Status**
 - a. General Fund**
 - b. Future Beach Nourishment Fund**
- 7. 2015 Tax Revaluation Impacts**

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- 8. FY 15-16 Budget Projection**
 - a. General Fund**
 - b. Future Beach Nourishment Fund**
- 9. DRAFT 5-Year Capital Replacement / Improvement Program**
- 10. General Fund 5-Year Forecast**
- 11. Remaining funds from 2013 Community Improvements Package**
- 12. Strategic Re-Assignment of Certain Full-Time Positions During FY 14-15 to Achieve High Priority Community Goals**

Town Manager Rush and Parks and Recreation Director Sanderson discussed in detail with the Board the issue of the potential elimination of certain full-time positions in the Parks and Recreation and Police Department, and the subsequent creation of one new full-time position in the Town organization to better meet service demands and promote the achievement of high priority community goals. Mr. Rush said over the years the organization had operated pretty lean and there were actually fewer full-time positions now than when he started working with the Town in 2001. Mr. Rush stated that they tried hard to maximize the value received from the resources they had and this item reflected an extension of that approach.

Mr. Rush said that over the years the Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff had done a terrific job keeping the appearance of the community looking good and they very much wanted to make sure they maintained the same standards set and make it better going forward. Town Manager Rush said that the recommendation they had been discussing for over a year was to request that the Board authorize the elimination of a Recreation Coordinator position and replace that with a new Parks Maintenance Worker position in the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Rush said the write-up to the Board included a lot of justification for this request but they essentially thought that it was more important for the Town going forward to invest those resources in the Parks Maintenance function than in the community center function. They believed they could handle the duties in the community center with existing full-time staff as well as part-time staff. Again, Mr. Rush noted that this request was rooted in the fact that resources were needed and the significant value that the organization and our community placed upon the appearance of the community. Mr. Rush noted that the reason this was presented to the Board today was that this would allow time to recruit for the Parks Maintenance position and have the person on board so that come April/May they could do a good job all summer long for the appearance of the community. This would unfortunately result in the loss of one employee's job with the Town, our Recreation Coordinator. Mr. Rush said he recommended if the Board agreed with this change was they eliminate that position; provide a 3-week notice allowing the employee to work through the end

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2 of February and also provide a two-week severance payment to assist with this
3 difficult transition, as well as any accrued vacation and pro-rated longevity.

4
5 ***Motion was made by Commissioner Hoover to eliminate the Recreation***
6 ***Coordinator position in Parks and Recreation.***

7
8 Commissioner Normile suggested considering an increase of more than a
9 2 week severance payment as they were in essence asking someone to step
10 aside so they could do something else. Town Manager Rush said that
11 essentially if the Board approved this action today they would communicate to
12 the employees that their last day would be Friday, February 27, almost 3 weeks
13 from now and then 2 weeks severance pay following that date. Mr. Rush said if
14 the Board thought a different severance payment was more appropriate they
15 could handle that, it was more of a precedent issue than a cost issue, as they
16 had done this one time in the past and in that case they did a 2 week severance
17 payment, as well as a reasonable working notice as well.

18
19 Following further discussion ***the Board voted on the motion above***
20 ***unanimously 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.***

21
22 Mr. Rush stated that in the Police Department they were recommending the
23 elimination of the 2 full-time Customer Service Assistant positions, and to replace
24 them with a new sworn full-time Police officer. Mr. Rush stated they felt that
25 ultimately tax dollars spent on those two positions were not as valuable as they
26 would be spent on a full-time Police Officer position. Chief Waters explained to
27 the Board the statistics of decreased calls and fielded questions concerning the
28 future plans envisioned for the Customer Service function and structure and the
29 need for another full-time sworn officer at the Police Department. Town Manager
30 Rush noted that we would handle the two full-time existing Customer Service
31 employees in the same way described for the Recreation Coordinator in Parks
32 and Recreation. Mr. Rush said they would continue to allow them to work
33 through February 27, and provide a 2 week severance payment, and accrued
34 vacation, and pro-rated longevity. Mr. Rush noted that the opportunity would be
35 extended to all of the individuals to continue to work on a part-time basis if they
36 were so inclined.

37
38 ***Motion was made by Commissioner Wright to eliminate the Customer***
39 ***Service full-time representatives, and add a full-time Police Officer. The***
40 ***Board voted unanimously 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.***

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2 **Potential FY 15-16 Budget Issues**
3

- 4 13. EI EMS, Inc. – Annual Update
5 14. Employee Compensation
6 15. Health Insurance
7 a. Restoration of \$1500 HSA Contribution
8 b. Retiree Health Insurance Stipend?
9 16. Additional “Community Appearance” Staff?
10 17. Planning and Inspections Services
11 18. Street Resurfacing
12 19. Beach Access Walkway Ratings / Replacements
13 20. Application Fee – Retire NC Program
14 21. Community Information Sign
15

16 **Potential Future Capital Projects**
17

- 18 22. Downtown Street Lighting Improvements
19 23. Paving of Emerald Isle Woods Park Entrance Road
20 24. Acquisition / Improvement / Redevelopment of Islander Drive
21 Properties
22 25. Future New Fire Station
23

24 **Other Issues To Consider**
25

- 26 26. Solid Waste Services
27 a. Desired Service Level Changes
28 b. Potential Simmons & Simmons Contract Extension
29 27. Continued Growth of Yard Debris Collection Program
30 28. Potential Commercial Sign Ordinance Amendments
31 29. Other Items
32 a. Beach vehicle ramp gate improvements
33 b. Desired changes for summer beach services?
34 c. Storm water improvement on Doe Drive
35 d. Commercial slips at EI Public Boating Access Area
36 e. Ideas to Encourage Upgrades to Existing Off-Premises Signs
37 f. Community Center Generator
38 g. Mechanical bike path / street edger
39 h. Future beach nourishment needs
40 i. Future new ocean fishing pier – financing ideas?
41 j. More involvement from Emerald Isle Business Association?
42 k. Jean Preston Memorial Playground
43 l. Bogue Inlet Dredging
44 m. Land Use Plan Update / UDO Simplification
45 n. Consistent “Branding” Efforts

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2 **Board Direction**
3

4 **30. Board Discussion, Identification of Additional Priorities, Concerns, Etc.**
5

6 Following the discussion of each agenda item with the Town Manager, and
7 Departments heads, the Town Board provided their feedback and outlined their
8 priorities for the upcoming year.
9

10 Commissioner Normile commented that if there was an intent for the Town to
11 grow and add events, and foster income during the shoulder seasons maybe the
12 focus would be the long term implementation of a one or two person Emerald Isle
13 Chamber of Commerce that was co-funded and not so much relying on the
14 volunteers of the Emerald Isle Business Association. Commissioner Normile
15 said this would obviously be a big discussion for another day.
16

17 Commissioner Wootten agreed and thought that would be something that should
18 be funded by the Town and the Business Association. Commissioner Normile
19 added and the State TDA funds as well, which other Towns had tapped into to
20 support.
21

22 Town Manager Rush said that ultimately he felt that it had to come from the
23 business owners; they needed to set that value as opposed to the Town.
24 Commissioner Normile noted that Swansboro received money from different
25 sources to fund their Chamber, and he would love to have more conversation
26 about this issue at some point.
27

28 Town Manager Rush summarized the Boards direction and priorities for
29 formulating the FY 15-16 budget as outlined below:
30

- 31 - strive to achieve a revenue-neutral tax rate for the General Fund (likely to be somewhere between
32 15.5 cents and 16 cents) and for the Primary Benefit Beach Nourishment Special District (likely to
33 be somewhere between 3.5 cents and 4 cents)
34
- 35 - highest budget priority for FY 15-16 should be placed on employee compensation and benefits
36
- 37 - plan for 2% cost of living increase; review consumer price index again in March and April
38
- 39 - strive to restore the full amount of the health savings account contribution; increase from \$1200
40 back to \$1500 annually (if sales tax revenues continue to be strong in current fiscal year, possibly
41 restore the \$300 in the current fiscal year)
42
- 43 - preserve quality of the Town's health insurance program for Town employees in FY 15-16
44
- 45 - develop cost-effective plan to provide some level of health insurance coverage to retired Town
46 employees with more than 20 years of service to the Town of Emerald Isle (efforts likely to focus on

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- 1
- 2 - a fixed monthly stipend amount rather than a % commitment to future insurance premiums in order
- 3 to provide greater cost-certainty for the Town)
- 4
- 5 - implement strategic reassignment of positions in the Police Department and Parks and Recreation
- 6 Department to achieve higher priority community and customer service goals
- 7
- 8 - continue contractual relationship with Carteret County for building inspections services for the
- 9 foreseeable future; recruit new Town Planner to administer / enforce Town development
- 10 ordinances
- 11
- 12 - re-activate the Joint EMS Committee to re-examine the best long term structure for emergency
- 13 medical services in Emerald Isle (likely to include 2 - 3 reps from EI EMS, Inc. and 2 - 3 from Town;
- 14 will include on future Board meeting agenda)
- 15
- 16 - timing and budget status is probably not right now to add additional staff for Public Works and
- 17 Parks and Recreation, but consider adding an additional inmate laborer to be assigned to Parks
- 18 and Recreation
- 19
- 20 - utilize FY 15-16 Powell Bill funding to resurface various street segments with the worst rankings
- 21
- 22 - continue historical strategy to replace 2 – 3 beach access walkways each year; also plan to
- 23 remove soundside walkways in poor condition at Lee, Ridge, and Piney
- 24
- 25 - delay pursuit of RetireNC designation / participation until a reliable and willing group is identified to
- 26 coordinate the program's requirements locally
- 27
- 28 - plan to install new LED electronic community events sign at strategic location near EI bridge or
- 29 Coast Guard Road intersection; relatively slow scrolling of Town and community event information;
- 30 include attractive frame and landscaping; also need to develop formal policy for Board to consider
- 31 regarding what groups, events, etc. are eligible to have information included on the sign
- 32
- 33 - "downtown" street lighting is not as high of a priority in FY 15-16 as other items discussed
- 34
- 35 - paving of EI Woods Park entrance road is not as high of a priority in FY 15-16 as other items
- 36 discussed
- 37
- 38 - allow Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee the latitude to determine how best to spend
- 39 currently reserved funds (in excess of \$100k; will soon reach \$130k or more);
- 40
- 41
- 42 - allow these funds to cover 100% of "downtown" street lighting or EI Woods Park paving costs if
- 43 desired by Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- 44
- 45 - explore legal options to force owners of abandoned properties along Islander Drive to remove
- 46 blighted features, improve aesthetics, etc.
- 47
- 48 - continue to consider construction of new Fire Station in the next 4 – 5 years
- 49

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- 3 - pursue contract extension with Simmons & Simmons Management for solid waste collection
- 4 services; no changes to service design, schedule, etc.
- 5
- 6 - pursue possibility of rental truck or used truck to supplement Town's yard debris collection efforts
- 7 during heavy volume times of the year
- 8
- 9 - continue to consider tweaks (but not significant policy changes) to the Town's commercial sign
- 10 regulations
- 11
- 12 - general preference indicated for the new Emerald Isle "logo / script"
- 13
- 14 - pursue new beach vehicle ramp gates in FY 15-16
- 15
- 16 - investigate less expensive tractor attachment to control grass encroaching on bike paths.
- 17

18 **(Detailed backup information for all items are attached to and,**
19 **incorporated into these minutes.)**

20

21 The Recommended Budget will be presented to the Board on May 12, 2015 after
22 which the Board will meet to review and adjust as necessary or desired.

23

24 **Adjourn**

25

26 ***Motion was made by Commissioner Hoover to adjourn the meeting. The***
27 ***Board voted unanimously 5-0 in favor. Motion carried.***

28

29 **The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.**

30

31 Respectfully submitted:

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33

34

35 Rhonda C. Ferebee, CMC, NCCMC
36 Town Clerk
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