



BLACK MOUNTAIN TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

April 25, 2024 | Special Called Meeting | Time: 8:30 A.M.

Town Hall Council Chambers | 160 Midland Avenue, Black Mountain, NC 28711

The Black Mountain Town Council held a meeting on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall, 160 Midland Avenue, Black Mountain, NC 28711. The purpose of this meeting was to hold a FY 2024-25 Budget Work Session.

Mayor C. Michael Sobol called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the following members in attendance: Mayor C. Michael Sobol, Vice Mayor Archie Pertiller, Council Member Alice Berry, Council Member Doug Hay, Council Member Pam King, and Council Member Ryan Stone.

The following staff members were present: Josh Harrold, Town Manager; Jessica Trotman, Planning Director/Assistant Town Manager; Wesley Barker, Town Clerk; John Coffey, Fire Chief; Chris Kuhn, Assistant Police Chief; Josh Henderson, Recreation & Parks Director. Several other staff members were also present.

FY 2024-25 Budget Work Session

Town Manager Josh Harrold presented the Town Council with information on the unassigned fund balance the Town has had between the years 2018-2023, with the current year's fund balance as 59%.

Year	Amount	Percentage
2018	\$2,812,979.00	30.5%
2019	\$2,778,006.00	32.1%
2020	\$3,379,370.00	38.7%
2021	\$3,550,454.00	37.0%
2022	\$4,014,358.00	56.0%
2023	\$5,029,538.00	59.0%

Town Manager Harrold stated the NC Local Government Commission recommends that local governments maintain an unassigned fund balance in the General Fund equal to at least eight (8%) percent of the adopted General Fund budget.

Next, the Town Council was presented with Town Debt Balances between 2018 and 2023. Current Town debt includes water lines, Town Square, Black Mountain Ave., Golf Carts, and Sanitation Trucks.

Year	Amount	Percentage Increased/Decreased Over Prior Years
2018	\$4,022,276.00	32.55%
2019	\$4,099,047.00	1.91%

2020	\$3,632,064.00	-11.39%
2021	\$3,304,764.69	-9.01%
2022	\$3,029,836.83	-8.34%
2023	\$3,093,898.50	2.11%

Town Manager Harrold stated there has been a 23.07% decrease in debt since 2018.

The Town Council was presented with a comparison chart of local municipalities sanitation budgets to show population, sanitation budget total, number of employees, monthly fees charged to residents, annual revenue (fees), household area median income (AMI) and Town tax rates. It was noted that all municipalities, except for Marion, provide recycling services.

Local Comparisons Sanitation							
Location	Pop	Budget	employees	Fee/Mnth	Annual Revenue (fees)	Household AMI	Tax Rate
Weaverville	4,678	\$1,056,340	5	\$3.63	no data	\$76,310	0.3500
Brevard	7,818	\$1,112,900	11	\$20.00	\$1,085,000	\$42,843	0.4500
Waynesville	10,620	no data	no data	\$9.00	\$575,000	\$44,920	0.4392
Marion	7,492	\$1,378,127	10	\$10.00	\$716,000	\$48,520	0.5500
Woodfin	8,072	\$918,963	7	\$0.00	\$0	\$59,144	0.3300
Black Mtn.	8,502	\$1,046,800	7	\$2.00	\$96,000	\$75,310	0.3210
Asheville	93,776	\$7,168,000	43	\$17.00	\$7,022,000	\$63,810	0.4030

Town Council was presented with a listing of all capital requests, requested new positions, and capital water fund equipment requests. Currently, with all requests included, the proposed General Fund budget would be over budget by \$2,429,238. The Town Council is being asked to review the requests and make some decisions on requests made that could be cut from this proposed budget to bring the overage down, or the Council could consider other revenue sources to cover these overages, which could include increases to fees or taxes. Further, Town Manager Harrold informed the Council that the sanitation fees would generate roughly \$360,000 in revenue. He also shared the example of if taxes were raised by one cent (\$0.01), it would increase revenues by approximately \$153,000. Additionally, the Town Manager explained that the proposed budget had the five percent (5%) cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) factored in, which was an approximate \$450,000 increase to the proposed budget. If the COLA was reduced by one percent (1%) it is taking off around \$90,000 in expense, thus reducing the proposed General Fund overage.

Some Council discussion ensued about several capital and personnel requests:

- Veterans Park Lighting- This is the ball field lighting and the proposed expense of \$24,000 is a result of a recent inspection and maintenance request by the manufacturer to replace these lights. The Council was in consensus to research Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grants which would help with the cost of replacing the lights with new LED lights and control functions that are much more safer than the current light control functions.
- Parking concerns at Grey Eagle, Geron Street and Lake Tomahawk overflow parking.
- Tabling the budget request for cameras at Grey Eagle.
- Discussion on police radio installation for the Police SWAT truck.
- Discussion ensued on the request to separate the roles of Planning Director and Assistant

Town Manager, and hire a new Planning Director.

- Newly created positions that are requested includes Fire Training Officer, Sanitation Supervisor, Assistant Public Works Director, and Public Information Officer.
- Discussion on the requested three (3) Firefighter II positions took place with Fire Chief Coffey citing needs of the department and ensuring each shift was fully staffed.
- Discussion of the Fire Training Officer position which is currently a dual role with the Deputy Fire Chief. This person would be responsible for mandated training of fire staff and community education/outreach. When asked by Council, Chief Coffey stated adding any new Firefighter II position(s) would be more of an urgent need than the Fire Training Officer position.

Town Manager Harrold stated \$1.7 million was pulled from Fund Balance for this Fiscal Year to balance the budget, with some being Capital Reserve. The Town borrowed \$400,000 to continue the fire truck purchase.

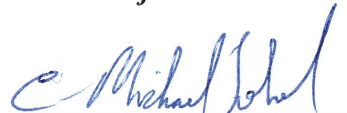
On the topic of fleet management, Mayor Sobol suggested creation of a town staff fleet committee, or similar, which could create a policy on how to recycle vehicles to other departments and to assess needs for new vehicles.

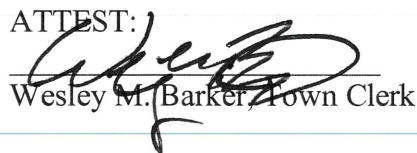
Council Member Stone suggested that Council Members take a few days to digest this information presented and the Town Manager would set up meetings with each Council Member to answer any questions they may have, and come back at a special meeting, or the next agenda meeting, to discuss the requests again before the Manager's recommended budget is presented to the Council in May.

Town Manager Harrold stated this proposed budget was an overall seven percent (7%) increase than the current Fiscal Year's budget. He gave an update on the recently distributed recycling carts stating that approximately 1.8% of the carts were returned to the Town, with approximately 4,000 carts being delivered.

Council Member Alice Berry made a motion to call for a special meeting on Thursday, May 9th, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. for a Council Budget Work Session coinciding the with the agenda review meeting. A vote of 5-0 in favor.

There being no further business, Mayor C. Michael Sobol adjourned the meeting at 9:28 a.m.


C. Michael Sobol, Mayor

ATTEST:

Wesley M. Barker, Town Clerk