

Minutes
Town of Yemassee Town Council
August 6, 2021, Budget Workshop; 3:30PM
101 Town Cir, Yemassee, SC 29945

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Colin Moore, Mayor Pro-Tem Peggy O'Banner, Councilmember Michelle Hagan, Councilmember Alfred Washington and Town Clerk Matthew Garnes

Absent: Councilmember Charlie Simmons

Media Present: None

Call to Order:

Mayor Moore called the Friday August 6, 2021, Budget Workshop to order at 3:36 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation:

Council Member Washington gave the invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Workshop Items:

Mayor Moore turned the meeting over to Town Clerk, Mr. Garnes to present the FY22 Budget. Mr. Garnes reported that another year is winding down in the Town of Yemassee and we have all persevered and adapted to our "new normal" amidst a global pandemic. The Town has remained operational the duration of the pandemic with a slight adjustment to our operating posture and continued to address projects as directed by the Town Council. Throughout the pandemic, our municipal services remained fully functional with no reduction in services. Our sound fiscal management and practices ensured that no reductions in services or staffing occurred. Additionally, the Town received multiple grants for various projects around Town which will improve the quality of life for all who call Yemassee home.

Mr. Garnes continued; One of my statutory duties is to prepare for your consideration an annual operating budget for the Town of Yemassee. Today, we'll review the proposed budget for FY22 budget year beginning September 1, 2021 and ending on August 31, 2022. The general fund budget is balanced and totals \$2,581,999.77. The value of a mil in the Beaufort County portion of the Town of Yemassee is \$669 and the value of a mil in the Hampton County portion of the Town of Yemassee is \$2,377. Hampton County is a Local Option County with a L.O.S.T. Credit Factor of .001075.

Mr. Garnes reported that as presented, the FY22 Budget does not include any cost of living or merit increases, but the Budget does include the 1% S.C. Public Employee Benefit Authority increase on employer retirement contributions. Employees enrolled in PORS (Police Officer Retirement System), increased from 18.84% to 19.84% starting July 1st while employees enrolled in SCRS (South Carolina Retirement Systems), which includes all other non-police personnel increased from 16.41% to 17.41% of their gross earnings. The budget does fund three new part-time positions including an Administrative Assistant to handle Human Resources functions, a Deputy Clerk of Court as well as an additional Public Works Technician which will be primarily handling maintenance, upkeep and responding to issues within the Sheldon portion of Town.

Mr. Garnes moved onto the Administration Department, the proposed budget is \$1,064,220.85 and explained the responsibilities of the Administration Department including Finance, Payroll, Planning & Zoning, managing the Town's social media presence, general record keeping for the Town, Business Licensing as well as receiving Accommodation & Hospitality Tax Payments. The budget for Administration does add a Part-Time position to assist with handling Human Resources and benefit enrollments a few days per week. The reason for the large increase on expenses in this department is due in part because of the several grant awards received as well as anticipated American Rescue Plan Money that will be coming to the Town in a few months. The budget for Administration funds town wide building maintenance, town wide Information Technology issues as well as the GIS/Mapping Platform that is required to be maintained for Hampton County emergency dispatch.

Mr. Garnes continued to Police Department, the proposed budget is \$900,903.77 and is led by Chief Gregory Alexander. The budget supports staffing and operations of the Police Department to ensure a high standard of Law Enforcement services for the residents and visitors of the Town of Yemassee. Additionally, it maintains current levels of Patrol and Traffic units, supports the D.A.R.E. Program at Fennell Elementary as well as funds a replacement vehicle from the loss of the Chiefs SUV in June of 2021. The budget does fund anticipated inmate housing costs from inmates detained at the Hampton County Detention Center- there is currently no charge for inmates housed at Beaufort County. Also, this budget does fund an anticipated Intergovernmental Agreement between the Town of Yemassee and Hampton County for Police Dispatching services. Mayor Pro Tem O'Banner asked if an agreement had been reached yet; Mr. Garnes advised them there hadn't been one reached yet but the County Council has a special meeting today at 4:00 and an executive session item includes Intergovernmental Agreements with the municipalities. Council Member Washington inquired as to the

amount Hampton County was charging for the Town previously to which Mr. Garnes responded \$30,000 per year broken down into \$2,500 monthly installments. Mr. Garnes briefly went over the Victims Advocate budget which is under Police.

Mr. Garnes continued to Public Works Department, which is led Lonnie Green, Public Works Superintendent. The proposed budget is \$330,158.41 and includes funding for an additional Public Works Technician to handle the Sheldon area, the annual payment on the John Deere tractor as well as purchasing a new Public Works truck. The budget also funds the purchase of an additional zero-turn mower, tractor sidearm attachment and woodchipper. This year a separate expense category has been added for new and replacement street signs within the Town as well as procurement of new trash cans for the town owned trash can program. Finally, the Public Works budget funds the municipal garbage contract with S&S Disposal.

Mr. Garnes then reviewed the Municipal Court budget proposal. Municipal Court is led by Chief Municipal Judge Sheryl P. McKinney and Clerk of Court Billy Sanford. The budget maintains the Chief Municipal Judge, an Associate Judge, the Clerk of Court as well as addition of a Deputy Clerk of Court. This budget appropriates funds for indigent defense as well as postage expenses that were previously expensed off the materials & supply category.

The Recreation Department operating budget is proposed at \$5,534.54 and covers supplies & materials, utilities for the recreation facilities, property taxes from Harold Peeples Ballfield as well as Concession Inventory.

Finally, Hospitality / Tourism is budgeted at \$80,000 which covers landscaping & beautification along tourism corridors, Advertising & Promotional, covering the town street light bill as well as potentially funding stormwater improvements in tourism areas.

Mr. Garnes prepared a breakdown of revenue that could be generated by the Town Council adopting a 1 mil Capital Improvement Program tax. This tax could be used for capital improvements which are defined as primarily non-recurring in nature such as new facilities, park upgrades, signage, and walking trails. The Town Council discussed benefits and cons on the CIP millage. Mayor Pro-Tem O'Banner asked what it would look like on a tax bill, Mr. Garnes reported at 4% on \$100,000 it would yield approximately \$4.00. Mr. Garnes mentioned that the mayor had considered potentially earmarking proceeds from the LRWS franchise fee for projects. Mr. Garnes said while that is a possibility, bear in mind that the franchise fee is only collected on customers

connected to LRWS for water and/or sewer. It would not be an across-the-board, equitable collection and leaves out places in Sheldon such as Bindon, Cotton Hall & Tomotley. Town Council opted to not proceed with it this year.

Adjournment:

Mayor Pro-Tem O'Banner made the motion to adjourn the budget workshop. Second by Council Member Hagan. All in favor, Meeting Adjourned.

Proclamations & Presentations:

Sandy Steele of Southern Carolina Alliance thanked the Town Council for allowing her to provide an update on a newly approved grant for the region. The USDA approved Southern Carolina Alliance's grant to engage retail strategies for seven towns in the promise zone including the Town of Allendale, City of Denmark, Town of Blackville, City of Walterboro, Town of Hampton, Town of Ridgeland, and the Town of Yemassee. The grant has no local match from any of the municipalities but will provide each of the municipalities with marketing material to present to prospective retail sector businesses with data specific to our municipality. The project will also conduct a real estate assessment with site selection criteria and identification of the top zones and sites viable for regional and national retailers. Ms. Steele once again thanked the council for allowing her to present and advised she'll be in touch with Town Staff.

New Business:

Mayor Moore read Ordinance 21-18, Consideration of an Ordinance Amending Portions of the Town of Yemassee Code, Chapter 3. He advised that this Ordinance would essentially be repealed and replaced with the Beaufort County Animal Ordinance which the Town would be required to have in effect for Beaufort County Animal Services Officers to handle animal issues within the Town. Hampton County lacks the resources and has had substantial delays in getting to incidents within the Town and in some instances, they simply have no room. At the Special Town Council meeting on the 19th of July, Council Member Simmons expressed concerns over the ordinance and subsequently the item was tabled until the next meeting. Mayor Moore stated that it is critical that we have an agreement in place for Animal Control issues as they arise. The Town does not have the facilities, staff or resources for long-term keeping of animals. Mr. Garnes advised that should the Ordinance pass first reading, the second and final reading will be next week. After the second reading and adoption, the Town will work with Beaufort County on executing an Intergovernmental Agreement. Mayor Pro Tem O'Banner made a motion to approve the Ordinance as presented. There was no discussion. Second by Council Member Hagan. All in favor, Motion Passed.

Public Comment:

None

Executive Session

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to enter executive session for contractual matters regarding Beaufort County Animal Control and for personnel matters regarding the Associate Judge position. Mayor Pro Tem O'Banner made the motion to enter executive session. Second by Council Member Hagan. All in favor, Executive Session began at 4:18 PM

Mayor Pro Tem O'Banner made a motion to conclude executive session at 4:34 PM. Second by Council Member Washington. All in favor, Regular Session resumed.

Mayor Pro Tem O'Banner made a motion to appoint Bertrand O. Dore as Interim Associate Judge for the Town of Yemassee assuming the same terms, stipulations, and rate of pay as the previous Associate Judge. There was no discussion. Second by Council Member Hagan. All in favor, Motion Passed.

Oath of Office was administered by Anthony O. Dore.

Adjournment

Mayor Moore asked for motion to adjourn. Council Member Washington made the motion to adjourn. Second by Mayor Pro Tem O'Banner. All in favor, Meeting Adjourned at 4:49 PM