

**Town Council Minutes
Morehead City, North Carolina**

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

The Honorable Council of the Town of Morehead City held the monthly Workshop Meeting on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, in the Municipal Chambers located at 202 South 8th Street, Morehead City, North Carolina.

This meeting was partially conducted utilizing Zoom Video Communication Inc. software due to the COVID-19 crisis and Governor Cooper's Executive Order 141 prohibiting the gathering of more than 10 people in a single indoor space. Those in attendance were:

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Gerald A. Jones, Jr.; Councilmembers George Ballou, David Horton, Keri V. McCann, William F. Taylor, and Diane C. Warrender.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Ryan Eggleston; City Attorney Derek Taylor, Fire Chief Jamie Fulk, and City Clerk Cathy Campbell.

OTHERS PRESENT: Elise Clouser of the Carteret News Times.

STAFF PARTICIPATING VIA ZOOM: Finance Director Jewel Lasater, Police Chief Bernette Morris, Human Resources Director Susan Nixon, Communications Director Alize Proisy, Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Riggs, Planning Director Sandi Watkins, Public Services Director Daniel Williams, Assistant Finance Director Leeann Vinson, Assistant Fire Chief Chris Judy, and Deputy Clerk/Executive Assistant Kathy Eagle.

OTHERS PARTICIPATING VIA ZOOM: Lisa Rueh and Lee Hinson of Downtown Morehead City Inc., Gloria McCarther, Curtis and Melissa Oden, Missy Oden, and James Swann.

Mayor Jones called the workshop meeting of the Morehead City Town Council to order at 9:05 a.m. with a quorum present.

JUNE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

City Manager Ryan Eggleston reviewed the proposed June 9, 2020 consent agenda items inviting questions and discussion. The items were presented as:

- Review Resolution 2020-R-30, endorsing the Carteret Community College Spanish Mackerel and Dolphin Fishing Tournament and authorizing actions necessary for the event to be held July 12, 2020, with a rain date of July 19, 2020.
- Review Resolution 2020-R-31, endorsing North Carolina Ducks Unlimited Billfish Tournament and authorizing actions necessary for the event to be July 22-25, 2020

at Ottis Landing, 705-707 Shepard Street, on the Morehead City waterfront.

Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Riggs stated that there were no new provisions requested apart from what has been requested in prior years.

JUNE PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

Review Adoption of FY2020/2021 Budget Ordinance with a General Fund of \$15,246,246, Water/Sewer Fund of \$7,815,625, and Sanitation (Solid Waste) Fund of \$1,066,000, for a Total of \$24,127,871 and a Tax Levy of \$0.38 Per \$100 Valuation, Which Reflects No Increase Over the Current Year and No Utility Fee Increases

This item is presented as notice that the public hearing will be held at next week's regular meeting. Councilmember Horton asked to pull specific items out of the budget to be voted on separately, such as the tax rate, assumed collection rate, and the library. It was agreed that this could be discussed further at today's budget meeting.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Discuss July 4th Fireworks

Recognizing that many communities are cancelling their July 4th celebration due to COVID-19, Mayor Jones stated that he is in favor of moving forward with the celebration and encouraged others to share their thoughts. City Manager Ryan Eggleston stated that a decision is requested in order to notify the fireworks company.

After some discussion, Councilmembers agreed by consensus to move forward with the fireworks display. The City will not encourage gathering, and hopes that all citizens will be responsible in maintaining social distancing guidelines while enjoying the Independence Day celebration.

The traditional concert will not be held.

Discuss Ordinance 2020-O-O5 Amending Section 30-356(e) of the Code of Ordinances by Adding Country Club Road, and Adding Section 30-258 Establishing "School Zones" Within the Town of Morehead City

City Manager Ryan Eggleston announced that the City received a Public Safety Grant in the amount of \$27,000 through the Carteret County Board of Education to purchase and install flashing lights at each school location. Staff is awaiting approval from NC Department of Transportation to reduce speed limits and erect the signals, and hopes to present the ordinance for consideration at the July meeting.

Discuss Debris Removal Contract

Public Services Director Daniel Williams advised Council of the upcoming debris removal contract as required by FEMA to receive disaster reimbursements. This contract is renewed every two years. The bid opening is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2020. Bid results will be presented at the June 9, 2020 regular meeting for consideration.

Discuss Piedmont Natural Gas Easement Request

Public Services Director Daniel Williams presented request from Piedmont Natural Gas (PNG) to grant them a ten-foot wide easement along Arendell Street fronting Kathrine Davis Park, for placement of gas line facilities. They have agreed to pay the Town \$28,100 for the perpetual easement. The City is seeking further information to confirm fair market value.

City Attorney Derek Taylor agreed that the City should receive full market value for the easement (value per acre). In addition, he would like to amend some of the wording within the easement and will discuss this with PNG.

Although it is unclear if such details can be worked out prior to next week's meeting, it was introduced to make Council aware of the request.

According to PNG, the railroad and NC Department of Transportation have denied requests for easements on their property.

Discuss Budget Ordinance Amendment 2020-10

City Manager Ryan Eggleston reviewed Budget Ordinance Amendment 2020-10 in support of the School Safety equipment grant. The amendment increases Restricted Intergovernmental and Transportation by \$27,000. Due to the type of procurement, the expenditure is categorized as transportation rather than police department.

Discuss Proposed FY2020/2021 Fee Schedule

City Manager Ryan Eggleston presented the proposed FY2020/2021 Fee Schedule for review and discussion in conjunction with adoption of the annual budget. Staff recently performed a comprehensive review of the schedule in order to eliminate outdated fees, eliminate redundancy, and make adjustments to accommodate current operations.

A brief discussion was held regarding tennis court fees; however, no changes were made.

Fire Chief Jamie Fulk reviewed the EMS Transport fees as presented. It was noted that these fees are collected by a contracted vendor, and are being added to the fee schedule as appropriate. These fees were last adjusted in 2012 and after surveying other similar size communities throughout North Carolina, the Department is recommending an increase for FY 2020/2021 to become effective July 1, 2020.

Chief Fulk pointed out that an error was made in their initial figures. Correcting the proposed figures, he stated that the ALS Non-Emergent Transport fee should remain the same

(\$450), and the BLS Non-Emergent Transport should be removed as it is already built into the fee schedule.

Councilmember Horton suggested lowering the transport rates to match the BlueCross/BlueShield allowable rates. Chief Fulk agreed to explore this possibility with the collections provider. It was noted that these rates discourage abuse of transport for non-emergent cases where patients use EMS in hopes of receiving emergency room priority. The City works with clients on an individual basis, when warranted, to establish payment plans.

Councilmember Taylor requested additional information on non-collectables.

Discuss Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation Regarding Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Mayor Jones stated that the Ad Hoc Committee assigned to meet with Concerned Citizens of Morehead City would be providing an update at the regular council meeting, and that they would be recommending the establishment of a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The board is to consist of nine (9) members, with one (1) seat designated to a member of the Concerned Citizens of Morehead City, one (1) seat designated to a member of the W.S. King Alumni Association; one (1) seat preferred to be a member of the senior population, and one (1) seat preferred to be a member of the youth population. Individuals will be required to apply for the positions and the Town Council will make the final selections. The Ad Hoc Committee hopes to implement the Board by September 1, 2020. Specific details are to be presented at the June 9, 2020 regular council meeting, with a request to authorize the City Attorney to draft a supporting resolution.

Other Business

Councilmember Warrender shared that the Governor's office has confirmed that bars are now authorized to serve alcohol outside, and questioned whether action on the City's part is required to allow the same. A lengthy discussion followed as to what may or may not be permissible. It was agreed that Planning Director Sandi Watkins would make a presentation at the June 9, 2020 meeting regarding what is permissible under the City's current regulations. It was noted that City regulations would only pertain to public property. Activity upon private property would depend upon the property owner's permission.

CLOSED SESSION PER NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3) TO CONSULT WITH CITY ATTORNEY.

Councilmember Ballou made a motion **to enter into Closed Session at 10:21 a.m. per NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3) to consult with city attorney.** Councilmember Taylor seconded and the motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Councilmember Warrender moved **to return to OPEN SESSION at 12:06 p.m.** Councilmember Taylor seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, Mayor Jones adjourned the meeting 12:07 p.m.

Gerald A. Jones, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

Cathy Campbell, City Clerk