



**TOWN OF GRANITE QUARRY  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 1:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Mayor Brittany Barnhardt, Mayor Pro Tem Doug Shelton, Alderman John Linker, Alderwoman Laurie Mack, Alderman Rich Luhrs

**Staff:** Interim Town Manager/Fire Chief/Public Works Director Jason Hord, Town Clerk Aubrey Smith, Police Chief Mark Cook, Finance Officer Shelly Shockley

**Call to Order:** Mayor Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

**1. Approval of Agenda**

**ACTION:** Alderman Luhrs made a motion to approve the agenda. Alderwoman Mack seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

**2. Discussion**

**Budget FY 24-24**

Interim Manager Hord presented to the Board on FY2024-2025 Capital Expenditures and Major / Noteworthy Items.

**A. Revenues**

- a) The current tax rate is .44. The assessed tax base this year is \$411,752,206; \$8,121,358 in Real and Personal tax base over last year and \$4,904,343 in Vehicle tax over last year. The estimated worth of 0.01 on the tax rate is \$41,175.

**B. Governing Body**

Figures were shown with a proposed 4% increase to Governing Body pay which would be in line with the recommendation for staff adjustments.

**C. Administration**

- a) Proposed reclassification and salary adjustments for 3 admin positions including Town Clerk, Finance Officer, and Office Assistant.
- b) Proposed 4% market adjustment for all employees with an effective date of 7/1/2024 and a 0:4% merit increase on annual evaluation dates.

There was Board consensus to move forward with making the market adjustment effective July 1 and keeping the merit increases on anniversary evaluation dates.

**D. Insurance for Employees**

The insurance renewal rate will be 4.5%. Staff recommends accepting the rate increase with the current vendor.

There was Board consensus to move forward with renewal of our current insurance.

**E. Planning / Code Enforcement**

- a) No recommendation for change in level of Planning services provided by N-Focus at this time.
- b) Options were given for contracting code enforcement services through N-Focus instead of Alliance.

There was Board consensus to move to N-Focus for code enforcement services, beginning at 4 hours per week.

**F. Police**

- a) Vehicle replacement fully upfitted \$62,000
- b) Flock / Verkada License Plate Cameras - \$7,000 / \$5,000 (Depending on wants and needs)
- c) Body Worn Cameras - \$6,067 per year for 5 years OR if grant is approved, cost would be 50% of the total.
- d) Laptop Replacement – 3 units at \$3,000
- e) No police salary adjustments are being requested at this time.

**Recess**

**ACTION:** Mayor Pro Tem Shelton made a motion to recess briefly. Alderman Linker seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

*The meeting recessed at 2:11 p.m.*

*Mayor Barnhardt called the meeting back to order at 2:18 p.m.*

*Moved to interview of Centralina regarding TM search process.*

**3. Interview**

**Centralina Town Manager Search Process**

Geraldine Gardner, Executive Director of Centralina, shared information with the Board regarding services available for the Town Manager search process and reviewed highlights from the written proposal provided to the Board. She reviewed the complimentary services available as well as additional add-on options. Board members asked questions regarding the specifics of the process. Ms. Gardner emphasized the importance of clearly communicating about the process as well as the importance of sticking to an expeditious timetable.

*Budget discussions continued at 2:54 p.m.*

**G. Fire**

- a) The request was made to add 3 full-time firefighter positions.
- b) The age of the current fire apparatus is becoming a concern. With two of the trucks now 30 years old, and the length of time that it takes to receive a firetruck, staff recommends starting the ordering process. It would be 4 years before delivery. The more that is paid upfront, the more money will be saved. Fire apparatus that are older than 15 years should be evaluated for rebuilding in accordance with NFPA 1912: Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing. NFPA 1901's Annex D further recommends that apparatus that are more than 25 years old be retired from the vehicle fleet.

- c) Cost of new firetruck – 1.2 million dollars. While this is a huge investment it is one that we expect will last for 25 years. This investment over a 15-year span represents 0.03 tax increase.

Staff will put together some numbers for options.

#### **H. Public Works**

- a) Requested a reclassification of one position and a promotion of one employee to a newly created position of Assistant Public Works Director.
- b) The need to upgrade the 1994 dump truck remains high. This unit is responsible for use during limb and leaf collection. \$40,000 was originally budgeted in the FY 23/24 annual budget toward the Capital Reserve Fund, however, the Board opted to transfer all but \$1,000 of that amount toward the Town Hall roof. The truck is spec'd under government contract with the cost not to exceed \$92,000 that would include all fees. The current dump truck would be sold with the proceeds back into general fund. We would estimate this sale at around \$12,000.
- c) CAC recommends additional banners throughout town. This would consist of 2 sets of banners of 30 each. This would be a one-time purchase cost of \$6,000. A slight increase in contracted services would arise from use of the bucket truck of around \$500 per year.
- d) It was mentioned at the Planning Retreat of a branded street sign. Staff recommends these being done in yearly phases. This would be a 2-year project at roughly \$4500.00 per year or \$9,000 total.

There was Board consensus to explore whether the signs or banners could be purchased within the current budget year. Staff will look into options and bring back to the Board.

#### **I. Parks and Recreation**

- a) Due to the likelihood that park improvements will happen via grant funding and private donations, no further capital projects are scheduled in this budget cycle.
- b) Public Works expects that the current years park budget is sufficient. This also includes that PERC budget for the year.

#### **J. Environmental**

The current environmental fee is \$12.00. It decreased from \$13.00 in 2021 when the recycling services were discontinued. As of current projections for next FY, we will lose \$3K at the current \$12.00 a month rate and this DOES NOT include any service cost associated with leaf and limb pickup. A \$1.00 increase is equal to \$15,930 in revenue.

There was Board consensus to have staff explore the expense versus revenues for the environmental fee and services.

#### **K. Streets**

- a) Current streets account balance as of 6/30/2023 is \$92,652.29. An additional unappropriated balance of \$56,600.00 will be brought forward as of 6/30/2024. This will make the total balance \$149,252.29. Staff is proposing that we allocate the balance, currently in unappropriated fund balance, and \$70,000 of the FY24/25 Powell Bill allocation, allowing for a budgeted street paving project of roughly \$210,000.

Alderwoman Mack asked that the expansion and addition of a sidewalk be considered for Legion Club and West Bank Street. Alderman Linker stated Old 80 was worth reviewing for the same reason. Mayor Barnhardt stated that the Village at Granite was disconnected and should be reviewed as well. There was Board consensus to revisit the conversations at a later date. Staff will work up figures based on the current recommendation.

**L. Current Unknowns**

- a) Civic Park upgrades- we will know much more after the last public input session.
- b) PARTF maximum ask is \$500,000 with a dollar-for-dollar match.
- c) Downtown transformational- Duke will finish the feasibility study and we can present the needs to legislators. Do we want to budget for any type of match?

Manager Hord asked how the Board would like the budget options to be prepared. He will start with an option at the current tax rate. Mayor Barnhardt asked that Town Hall upgrade funding options be included. She was interested in seeing what improvements could be made with the amount currently set aside as well as debt service options for upgrades specifically to technology and the board room.

The Board would like to visit different areas of the town and will plan the list of places and set a time at April's regular meeting.

**Adjourn**

**ACTION:** Alderman Linker made a motion to adjourn. Alderman Luhrs seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

The meeting ended at 4:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Aubrey Smith*

Town Clerk