



**TOWN OF GRANITE QUARRY  
TOWN COUNCIL  
BUDGET WORKSHOP  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, March 27, 2025, 1:00 p.m.**

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

**Staff:** Town Manager/Fire Chief Jason Hord, Town Clerk Aubrey Smith, Finance Officer Shelly Shockley, Police Chief Todd Taylor, Public Works Director Colton Fries

**Call to Order:** Mayor Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

**1. Approval of Agenda**

**ACTION:** Council Member Luhrs made a motion to approve the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Shelton seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

**2. Discussion**

**Preliminary FY 25-26 Budget Numbers**

Manager Hord presented to the Council on preliminary FY 2025-2026 items. Many of the capital expenditures and major/noteworthy items were introduced at the Council's February Planning Retreat. He shared the estimated end-of-year numbers for FY 2024/2025 for reference.

**A. Revenues**

The current tax rate is .44. The assessed tax base this year is \$425,970,955; \$12,704,391 in Real and Personal tax base over last year and \$1,514,357 in Vehicle tax over last year. Annexation increases are \$28,584. The estimated worth of 0.01 on the tax rate is \$42,992. Rowan County uses the Per Capita method for the distribution of Sales and Use tax to Granite Quarry.

**B. Unassigned Fund Balance**

On July 1, 2024 the Unassigned Fund Balance was \$3,425,822. Given the estimated revenues, estimated expenses, and what is reserved by state statute, the estimated Unassigned Fund Balance at year end will be \$2,881,609.

**C. Governing Body, Contingency, and Transfers**

Increased attorney fees and the added lobbyist contract are included in the suggested increase. The training line was increased this year to reflect more council member engagement in meetings and conferences. The funds to pay Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members for attendance per meeting have been worked into the estimates as well.

**D. COLA/Merit**

The current year's cost of living adjustment was 4% with an additional 0-4% allotted for merit increases. The proposed COLA for FY 2025-2026 is 3% with 0-3% merit increases. Mayor Barnhardt asked for the monetary value of a 1% increase on payroll and whether local municipalities have reported what they will be recommending for COLA. Staff will share the local COLA numbers when they are received.

**E. Administration**

The numbers shown included the proposed salary of an additional part-time Office Assistant and the promotion of the current Office Assistant to Community Engagement Coordinator. The Admin personnel numbers also include the contracted Planner.

**F. Police**

- 2 vehicle replacements
- 2 additional vehicles
- 2 additional FT officer positions
- One-time lump-sum increase and salary adjustments

Chief Taylor presented a department assessment. The Council asked questions regarding specifics of the assessment. Discussion on the Police Department's needs included the fee for contracted police services from Faith and the cost of hiring a new full-time officer. Representatives from Granite Quarry will meet again with representatives from Faith to continue negotiations.

**G. Fire**

- The request was made to add a part-time firefighter 7 days a week instead of the current 4 days a week.
- One-time lump-sum increase and salary adjustments
- Fire truck payment of \$149,370
- Additional 15 collar mics for new rations
- Additional online training program for each member to assist with ISO rating retention.

**H. Public Works**

- 1 new FT Technician
- 1 additional PW truck
- 1 Scag zero-turn mower
- Spring/Winter banners
- 21-foot Christmas Tree for the Lake Park

Discussion on the town banners included ideas from individual council members on spacing, font, color, and design. There was consensus for Manager Hord to discuss the ideas for changes with the Community Appearance Commission.

**I. Parks and Recreation**

The Events/Community Appearance Commission budget was moved out of the Parks and Recreation line.

**J. Events/ Community Appearance Commission**

Council members shared that they were pleased with the amount of money Debbie Loflin-Benge has been able to raise for the events as Event Coordinator. There was consensus that if staff wanted

to do more within the Events line, the request could come to the Council and the funds could be moved from Contingency.

**K. Rowan County Tax Rates**

Rowan County Tax rates were reviewed and discussed. Council members discussed the purpose of a car fee and the possibility of implementing one for Granite Quarry. Mayor Pro Tem Shelton requested to see the value of a penny on each municipality's tax rate. Staff will compile the data.

**L. Preliminary Totals**

Manager Hord showed the preliminary totals with the increases and additional capital items.

- 24/25 Budget \$4,784,366
- 24/25 Budget as amended \$4,950,366
- 24/25 Estimated End-of-Year \$4,227,647
- 25/26 Proposed \$5,134,072

**M. Large Projects**

Manager Hord shared the progress of current large projects:

- Civic Park Project – In Design Phase
- Sidewalk TAP Project – In Right-of-Way Phase
- Downtown – Needs Survey
- Centennial Trails – Survey in Progress

**N. Current Unknowns**

Manager Hord shared that there were still items that would need to be added into the budget once the exact figures were known.

- Exact figures on health insurance
- Exact figures on liability insurance and worker's compensation
- Contracted rate for police services for Faith

Mayor Barnhardt asked that estimates for the projected annexation revenues be shared. Manager Hord will gather that information.

**O. Next Steps**

Manager Hord asked how the Council would like the budget options to be prepared and whether any capital outlay items should be removed before the budget was prepared. Individual council members expressed a desire to see multiple options. Mayor Pro Tem Shelton stated he would like to see the Public Works capital requests protected. There was discussion regarding working any "wish list" items into the current year's budget and whether the Police Department salary adjustments could be made sooner than the new fiscal year using the funds in the personnel line that remained unused due to vacancies. Manager Hord will bring the information to the April meeting for the Council's discussion and potential action.

It was decided by consensus that the next budget meeting will be held April 17, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

**3. Discussion Special Project Fund**

There was consensus to bring a budget amendment to the April meeting to move funds from Special Projects to Public Works to make cosmetic updates to the hallway and two front offices. Public Works will also paint the conference room.

There was discussion regarding amending the schedule of fees to include a fee for not complying with the ordinance to remove trash cans from the curb within 24 hours. Manager Hord will follow up with the Planning Department and Code Enforcement Officer for direction.

**Adjourn**

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

The meeting ended at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Aubrey Smith*

Town Clerk