



**TOWN OF GRANITE QUARRY
TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 17, 2025, 9:00 a.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 9:12 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda

ACTION: Council Member Mack made a motion to approve the agenda. Council Member Linker seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

2. Continued Discussion

Preliminary FY 25-26 Budget Numbers

Manager Hord presented to the Council updated preliminary FY 2025-2026 budget numbers. Per the Council's request, some of the larger items and capital expenses originally requested for the upcoming budget were able to be purchased within the current year's budget.

A. Revenues

The same information presented at the last few meetings was shared again. 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 has been updated to \$2,592,375.

C. Governing Body, Contingency, and Transfers

The numbers for the Governing Body and Contingency and Transfers expenditures were reviewed. There was discussion for clarification on what was included in the transfers to other programs.

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 has been changed to 2% with 0-3% merit increases.

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 increase in insurance and increase in Planning contracted hours were included in the budget presented.

Council Member Luhrs joined the meeting at 9:22 a.m.

F. Police

The updated figures for the Police Department were presented. Two additional vehicles have been purchased with funds from the current budget year. The Council approved the one-time lump-sum increase and salary adjustments to take effect within the current fiscal year at the last regular meeting and those will take effect April 27, 2025. Chief Taylor stated that the increase in base pay has already generated interest. The two new positions and vehicles have been removed from the budget request with the hope that they can be added back mid-year if necessary. The proposed budget does include revenues from Faith.

G. Fire

The updated Fire Department numbers were presented to the Council. They included:

- 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; and
- Additional online training program for each member to assist with ISO rating retention.

H. Public Works

The updated Public Works numbers were reviewed. The new truck and Scag zero-turn mower have been purchased within the current budget. The updated requests include:

- 1 new FT Technician
- Spring/Winter banners
- 21-foot Christmas Tree for the Lake Park

I. Powell Bill

There was discussion regarding the estimated end of year and projected next fiscal year Powell Bill amounts. Finance Director Shockley stated there was discussion regarding moving the Powell Bill funds to their own fund.

J. Environmental

Manager Hord showed the figures for the contracted services and explained the audit process for environmental fee collection and trash service. The proposed budget showed a two-dollar increase to the Environmental Fee from \$13 to \$15.

K. Parks and Recreation

The Events budget was moved out of the Parks and Recreation line.

L. Events/ Community Appearance Commission

Manager Hord updated the figures presented previously by \$6,000 to include funds for marketing. The need for marketing and professional materials was discussed.

M. Rowan County Tax Rates

The information on Rowan County Tax rates was presented again.

N. Preliminary Totals

Manager Hord showed the updated preliminary totals with the changes discussed.

• 24/25 Budget	\$4,784,366
• 24/25 Budget as amended	\$4,954,841
• 24/25 Estimated End-of-Year	\$4,439,895
• 25/26 Proposed	\$4,781,772

O. Next Steps

Manager Hord stated that the next steps were to determine whether the Council wanted to add a car fee and, if so, how much. The Council discussed pros and cons of a car fee and what members felt was an appropriate amount and use for the funds. There was consensus to move forward with a \$20 car fee. There was direction to continue to approach the budget conservatively and prepare it without a tax increase.

P. Lifestyle Spending Account

Per the Council's request to look for ways to enhance the benefit package in a way that would benefit all employees and not only those taking advantage of the town's dependent coverage, Clerk Smith introduced the idea of a Lifestyle Spending Account that would be flexible, post-tax funds that could be used for a variety of health and wellness related items and reimbursed through the payroll system. Individual council members stated they were not in favor of a post-tax benefit with restrictions. Mayor Barnhardt suggested staff should look into a Health Savings Account for employees to be able to save up for health-related expenses in the future when there are enough staff to administer the program. The Council discussed possibly passing the benefit on to employees in the form of a higher longevity bonus.

Adjourn

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

The meeting ended at 11:19 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aubrey Smith

Town Clerk