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Minutes of the Meeting of
The Liberty Town Council
Budget Retreat
Reitzel Center
Held on April 22, 2024 1PM

Present

Mayor : The Honorable Filmore York

Council: Larry Coble, Terry Caviness, Don Herndon, Tyson Nixon
and Greg Carpenter

Town Manager: Scott Kidd

Town Clerk: Jessica Brown

Town Attorney: Bill Flowe

Staff: Police Chief; David Semrad, Library Director; Brenda
Heindl, Safety Director; Bret Pedigo, Assistant Town
Manager; Janie Phelps, Public Works Director; Joseph
Walsh

Call to Order and Welcome - Mayor

Mayor York called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and welcomed everyone. He said we need to think about the future and keep an open mind. Everyone is looking at us right now and we need to think and not make hasty decisions.

Agenda Review/Opening Remarks - Scott Kidd

The Town Manager Scott Kidd welcomed everyone. We need to look at the next five to ten years. He has heard our population could double here and go up to 100,000 in the region. There are growing pains.

Budget Discussion

We dropped the tax rate to \$.55 last year due to tax evaluations. What are our goals for the 24/25 budget? The fund balance is currently below 13%. Give employees a 2 - 3% raise while reducing no more than 2% of the budget? He gave a handout of salaries for different positions from the NCLM.

Why increase revenue? LGERS (retirement), medical, and dental are increasing as well as general inflation. Mayor York asked how we can fund this? Council Member Nixon asked how we can fund our houses? It was suggested to raise the trash can rate from 17.00 to 23.00 per month. Every penny of tax raise gives us \$28,838.00. Payroll is roughly 2,571,400 per year. We are not changing water rates this year. Council Member Herndon asked what if we had stayed at \$.64 last year? The Town Manager said we would have almost \$800,000 if we had not decreased taxes. Council Member Coble said we have to start thinking about purchasing a fire truck which is a big expense. He said there is no way to cut the budget out of this situation. Council Member Caviness

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suggested raising the trash can charge to \$25.00 per month. The Town Manager said he needs to do his Budget Presentation next month and needs guidance on which way to go. If we don't increase the fund balance the LGC will make us. Council Member Coble said the Police and Fire Departments are key to explaining the tax increase. Mayor York said leaf and limb pickup has improved and Council Member Coble said that costs dollars. Joseph Walsh said it is \$400.00 per trip to the dump. Council Member Nixon asked about a sales tax referendum but the Town Manager said only counties can do that. Council Member Herndon said inflation is a national problem. Council Member Larry Coble said they also need to consider the budget requests from the EDC, Chamber, and Senior Center. Bret Pedigo said it would be about \$7,000- 7,500 on a fifteen year loan for a new fire truck. Mayor York said citizens don't like going up and down - raise it and keep it. Council Member Carpenter said they need to be transparent with the numbers.

Overview of the Day and Takeaways - Scott Kidd

The Town Manager thanked everyone and said he appreciates the discussion. These are just hard decisions to make.

Council Comments

Council Member Carpenter said we need to think about how to present and include the need for police and fire personnel. Council Member Coble suggested that at least \$.62 and also look at \$.64. It was agreed that they will have another meeting on May 13th at the same time.

Mayor Comments

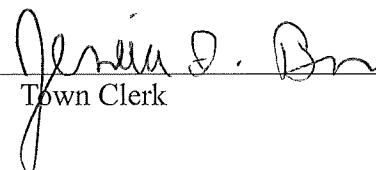
Mayor York said he appreciates the discussion and it is not going to get any easier in the future.

Adjourn

Council Member Tyson Nixon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Don Herndon seconded the motion which passed unanimously with Council Members: Tyson Nixon, Greg Carpenter, Don Herndon, Terry Caviness, and Larry Coble voting yes. The meeting was adjourned.



Mayor Filmore York

ATTEST: 

Town Clerk