

Budget Retreat
May 13, 2024 1PM
Reitzel Center
128 S Fayetteville Street, Liberty NC 27298

Present

Mayor : The Honorable Filmore York

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

Town Manager: Scott Kidd

Town Clerk: Jessica Brown

Town Attorney: Bill Flowe

Staff: Police Chief; David Semrad, Safety Director; Bret Pedigo,
Assistant Town Manager; Janie Phelps, Public Works Director;
Joseph Walsh, Parks and Recreation Director; Kolby Mcpherson

Call to Order and Welcome - Mayor

Mayor York welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Council Member Greg Carpenter is unable to attend due to a work commitment. He said we have done a lot to make improvements to the Town such as adding a leaf vac and gravel truck. It is getting down to crunch time for the Budget. Inflation went wild and the tax money did not come in like we thought it would.

Opening Remarks - Scott Kidd

The Town Manager appreciates the phone calls and texts he has gotten about the information he sent.

Budget Discussion

The Town Manager shared the budget software on the screen - actuals versus projected. Traveling and training would be the first thing to go if we make cuts. Every penny of taxes is \$28.38. He is opening up for questions. Council Member Herndon asked about animal control and if it is still in there since we had talked about outsourcing. Mr. Kidd said it is for now. Janie Phelps said the pay will be based on call volume and population. Jonathan Moody is the Animal Services Director in Randolph and his goal is to have it for the whole county Police Chief Semrad said rabies shots are a big expense and they are down several positions and the new officers would need to be vaccinated. Council Member Herndon asked if we got paid for mowing the railroad right of way. Attorney Flowe said we did in the past but now we don't. The Town Manager said he needs a consensus so he can complete his Budget Presentation. The books he sent included a tax rate of .60 - .64. Council Member Coble asked about raising the garbage rate to \$25.00. Council Member Nixon asked about reducing the hours at the library. Mayor York said that is the only access some people have to books and the internet. Council

Member Coble said maybe just raise the tax back to before and leave the garbage rate the same. The Town Manager said the Fire Department helps cover Julian and Staley and gets no reimbursement. Fire Chief Talbott said other Fire Departments are struggling as well but it does help our DOI (Department of Insurance) rating.

The Town Manager said cuts will have to be made if the tax rate remains \$.60. It would be tight if something happened. Everything is up due to inflation. Council Member Coble said we should make it \$.64 to maintain and address needing a new fire truck. The Town Manager said we must put money back in the bank before the LGC will even talk about it. He added that we provide every service possible in town. Chief Talbott said if we don't go up to \$.64 it will be hard to keep employees. Mayor York said we need vision and a plan. Council Member Coble said he likes our services and what we have done the last eight years. Council Member Herndon said it is a mistake to cut now. Council Member Nixon said we need to look at how to save and not spend. The consensus was to make the tax rate \$.64 and no trash rate increase.

Council Comments

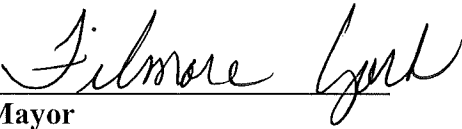
Council Member Caviness is wondering about plans for the old Police Station.

Mayor Comments

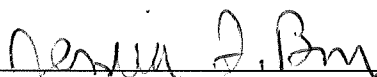
Mayor York thanked everyone for good questions and good conversation.

Adjourn

Mayor York adjourned the meeting.



Mayor



Town Clerk