

**Stoneville Town Council
Special Meeting Minutes
(Budget Work Session)
April 23, 2024 – 6:00 PM
Vera Holland Center – 203 E. Main Street**

Special Meeting

Present were Mayor Kathy Stanley-Galvan, Council Members Johnny Farmer, Curtis Bennett, Henry Thornton, Lee Shelton, and Daisy Smith. Also present were Town Administrator Barbara Hollerand, Finance Officer Shannon Tucker, Town Clerk Deleia Hutcherson, Town Attorney Eugene Russell, Public Works Director Byron Curry, Parks & Recreation Director Dillon Brown, Fire Chief Joel Freeman, and Officer Brandon Rivera.

Welcome: Mayor Galvan called the meeting to order after the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation at 6:05pm.

Minutes: Mayor Galvan asked for a motion to approve the Special Meeting (Annual Budget Retreat) minutes from March 9, 2024. Councilman Shelton made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilman Thornton seconded. Motion carried.

Agenda: Mayor Galvan asked for a motion to approve the April 23, 2024, Agenda. Councilman Thornton made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilwoman Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Finance Officer Shannon Tucker presented the Preliminary Fiscal Year Budget for 2024-2025. She said the budget is balanced without raising any rates to citizens and most departments received what they requested with minimal adjustments.

Councilman Farmer questioned the tax levy revenue line item and said he expected it to be more due to the revaluations. Ms. Tucker stated she based it off preliminary numbers provided by Todd Hurst, Tax Administrator for Rockingham County. Todd provided a conservative estimate and stated final numbers will not be available until September due to a number of appeals still being processed.

Councilman Farmer requested to see actuals for the last three to five years to compare to the projected line items for 2024-2025. Finance Officer Tucker stated actuals for the current year-to-date were provided. Ms. Tucker said she would also pull actuals for previous years and submit them to everyone via email.

Councilman Bennett questioned the exact purpose of this meeting in the budget process. Finance officer Tucker stated this is an open work session to review the preliminary 2024-2025 budget. The budget was prepared using projected revenue numbers and expenditure requests received from Department Heads at the Budget Retreat in March. She stated any budget changes requested by the Council at this meeting will be made prior to presenting the 2024-2025 Proposed Budget at the May 14th meeting. The next step will be the Public Hearing at the June 4th meeting and the Council may choose to approve the budget for the next fiscal year.

There was back and forth discussion between Councilman Farmer, Councilman Bennett, and Finance Officer Tucker regarding various grant line items. Councilman Farmer reiterated his request for prior year and current year actuals to be provided on budget reports. He also asked that this information be provided prior to meetings so the Council has time to review and be better prepared for these discussions.

Mayor Galvan advised the meeting would be moving forward with each department head commenting on their budget items. She asked Chief Freeman to start with the Fire Department budget.

Chief Freeman questioned the Fire Chief salary line. Finance Officer Tucker said she was asked at the March budget retreat to look at increasing the salary line to \$75.00 per week and she was able to increase to \$70.00 per week. There was back and forth discussion on this topic and everyone agreed the salary adjustment was in line with the request made at the budget retreat in March. Chief Freeman asked for clarification on a request made by the Council at the budget retreat to obtain an estimate on a new fire truck. Councilman Farmer said he didn't need to get a full bid packet together at this time. The Council asked Chief Freeman to get an estimate on the cost of a new fire truck that is identical to the one we currently have. Mayor Galvan asked Finance Officer Tucker to consider this as a capital outlay project and to research financing options.

Councilman Bennett questioned our fund balance and there was discussion surrounding investment opportunities. Town Attorney, Eugene Russell suggested that our Finance Officer check to see what our current return on investment is and also look at our investment policy. We can then consider other investment opportunities and reach out to the LGC and our auditor for guidance. Councilman Farmer said we might want to consider putting our banking services out for bid.

Officer Rivera spoke on the Police Department Budget. He said the salary line item was increased as requested. He commented on the uniform line and said they asked for \$5,500 but it was decreased to \$4,000. He said this would probably be a reasonable amount to outfit four officers but it wouldn't cover vests that will expire January, 2025. Councilman Farmer was ready to increase this line item but Officer Rivera said there are usually grants available to cover the cost of vests. If not, he said they have funds from the McMichael grant they can use.

Councilman Farmer asked if the McMichael Foundation places any stipulations on their grants. It was confirmed by Officer Rivera and Chief Freeman that there are no requirements other than a thank you letter acknowledging the receipt of funds. The McMichael Foundation does not require any documentation or reporting on how the dollars are spent. It was determined that thank you letters have been sent from the department heads in the past. Councilman Farmer requested that going forward, copies of the letters should be sent to the Town Administrator so staff can also create a thank you letter from the Mayor and Council.

Officer Rivera said the only item not in the budget was his request for a new Durango to replace one that has aged out. He has discussed this with Ms. Tucker and they will look at grants to cover this purchase.

Dillon Brown spoke on the Parks and Recreation Budget – Director Dillon Brown said there were few changes to his budget from last year. Councilman Farmer said he wants to make sure the funds are in the budget to get the tennis courts pressure cleaned and the lines repainted. He also wants pickle ball lines on the court. Mr. Brown said he would make sure this happens. There was back and forth discussion between Mr. Brown, Mayor Galvan, and Councilman Farmer on the timing of getting the scoreboard installed and wired. There was also back and forth discussion between Mr. Brown and Councilman Bennett on the salary line item. Councilman Bennett asked about the Recreation liability insurance and Ms. Tucker explained each department had liability insurance. He asked if the Council could see the limits of liability in the policy. Ms. Tucker advised the new policy should be received

next month but she would provide this information from the current policy. Councilman Bennett also asked what the total policy was on the Town. She said she would look up the information and email it to everyone.

Byron Curry spoke on the Public Works and Water/Sewer Budget – Director Byron Curry said he didn't ask for many changes to his budget. He did request an increase in Public Works equipment to purchase a knuckle boom truck. There was also an increase in road construction maintenance due to the number of streets that need to be repaired. Councilman Farmer commented on the Powell Bill allocation and told Byron he also has these funds available for repairing potholes.

Town Administrator, Barbara Hollerand, did bring up a salary allocation change for consideration. A portion of the Town Clerk salary is allocated to the Water/Sewer salary budget which is accurate due to utility billing. The other portion is allocated to the Public Works salary line item and should be moved to Administration. She stated the salary split would be 50/50 between Water/Sewer and Administration. The Council advised Ms. Tucker to make the change.

There was back and forth discussion between Ms. Tucker and the Council about showing comp and/or overtime as a separate line item for better visibility. Ms. Tucker advised this is difficult with QuickBooks and the way payroll is processed. She stated a separate report can be provided on overtime and comp each month. Councilman Farmer said they already receive too many reports and need information consolidated so it appears as a line item in the budget. Ms. Tucker explained this is why we are looking to update the financial software and Councilman Farmer agrees now is the time to do it.

Mayor Galvan asked for a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a) (3) to consult with the Town Attorney, and (6) personnel discussion.

Motion to go into Closed Session was made by Councilman Shelton. Councilwoman Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Motion to go out of Closed Session was made by Councilwoman Smith. Councilman Shelton seconded. Motion carried.

Mayor Galvan announced the return to Open Session.

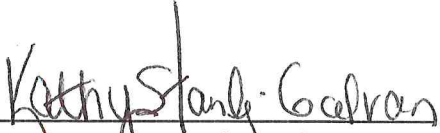
Councilman Farmer made a motion to appoint Officer Brandon Rivera to Interim Chief as long as he serves in the capacity of heading the Police Department. Seconded by Councilman Thornton. Motion carried by a majority vote of 4 to 1. Council members Thornton, Shelton, Smith, and Farmer voted yes. Council member Bennett voted no.

Councilman Farmer made a motion that during Officer Rivera's time as Interim Chief, he is paid an additional \$210.00 per week. Councilman Shelton seconded. Motion carried.

Councilman Farmer made a motion that after Town Administrator Barabara Hollerand speaks with Officer Rivera, we formally post the position for sixty days to recruit a Police Chief. Seconded by Councilman Thornton. Motion carried by a majority vote of 4 to 1. Council members Thornton, Shelton, Smith, and Farmer voted yes. Council member Bennett voted no.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilman Farmer. Councilman Thornton seconded. Motion carried.

Adjourned at 10:03pm


Mayor, Kathy Stanley-Galvan


Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson

