

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE TOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWN OF WILLIAMSTON, NC

April 25, 2021

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Williamston met in a special session on Monday, April 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Assembly Room, 102 East Main Street, Williamston, NC.

PRESENT Mayor Joyce Whichard-Brown
Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Ronell Rodgers, Jerry Knox, Alton Moore, Al Chesson, and William Coffield
Town Administrator: Christina Craft, Interim
Town Clerk: Jessica Godard
Finance Officer: Linda Harrison
Police Chief: Travis Cowan
Fire Chief Michael Peaks
Town Attorney: Watsi M. Sutton
Recreation Director: Allen Overby
Public Works Director: Kerry Spivey
Planner and Zoning Administrator: Cameron Braddy

ABSENT None

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

The Mayor called the meeting to order. Commissioner Knox led the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Moore offered the invocation, after a moment of silence for the various events occurring in our country.

AGENDA APPROVED

The Mayor asked if there were any adjustments to the meeting Agenda or if the Board wished any items to be removed or added to the Agenda. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to approve the agenda as presented.*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

The Interim Town Administrator provided the following budget message:
“Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

It is with much respect and appreciation that, on behalf of the staff of the Town of Williamston, I offer the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Annual Operating Budget. It is prepared in response to the goals established during the Annual Board Retreat and in direct response to the needs of our community.

The current state and national economy make it difficult for small communities like Williamston to flourish. With many urban areas booming, it is hard to convince State Legislators of the revenue needs of small towns. As it has in the past several years, the economy continues to be a dominant factor in preparing this budget. With that in mind, I am confident that this proposed budget will allow the Town to remain fiscally conservative in our ongoing efforts to keep our expenditures in check. This stretching of every dollar received continues to put strain on our ability to perform the essential functions of the Town. Our staff continues to provide those services with great passion and keen interest as they continue to find ways to maximize every dollar spent to accomplish the goals set out by them and the Board.

This year’s combined budget for all funds totals \$10,967,970.

General Fund	\$6,365,104
Water and Sewer Fund	\$4,295,616
Powell Bill	\$252,250
Storm Water	\$55,000

This reflects approximately \$54,000 increase in the General Fund and \$124,000 increase in Water and Sewer fund. The Powell Bill Budget will be saved for at least one year, allowing for larger paving projects across Town.

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This budget includes:

- A 2% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment)
- A ½% merit increase given at the Department Head's discretion
- Medical Insurance premiums increased by 19%
 - Current deductible \$5,500 with the Town reimbursing HAS so that the employee only pays \$2.250
- Local Government Employee Retirement contributions increased by 1.2%
- Funding for all debt services
- Purchase of 2 police vehicles
- Purchase of necessary equipment for all departments
- Operation expenses to continue services to citizens at the current level

In this Fiscal year's budget, we continue to follow a practice initiated in Fiscal 2014 and maintained in Fiscal 2015-2019 of setting aside funds to cover future costs of our Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). These benefits are offered to employees upon their retirement. At the start of Fiscal 2015, OPEB was removed as a benefit to any employee hired after that date. All employees hired prior to the start of Fiscal 2014 are eligible for OPEB. Most of the cost for OPEB will be incurred in the future but the liability for this future benefit is accumulating now. Based on the actuarial study performed in 2014 and again in 2017, the Board determined that it is important to assure financial security for the town and the ability to pay those future benefits. At the end of Fiscal 2019, \$700,000 was moved into a trust fund for the sole purpose of paying future OPEB liability. Proactive efforts made to continue funding this future cost to include \$100,000 was moved into the trust fund in 2020 and will hopefully move another \$100,000 in the current budget year. We continue to pay OPEB for current retirees (approximately \$115,000) out of our annual operating budget.

For the Fiscal 2020 budget, the property tax rate will not increase. Town staff will continue to work on achieving a satisfactory collection rate and promoting economic growth to maintain a stable tax revenue picture for our residents.

In the upcoming budget, the town is not using any of its fund balances to cover operating costs. This is worthy of note as so many rural entities have used and continue to use fund balance to balance their budget. Our goal is to increase our fund balance by \$50,000 in 2021/2022 budget. The Local Government Commission (LGC) expects municipalities to carry a fund balance to cover 6 months of expenditures in case of unexpected emergencies and Williamston has met the LGC requirements. Although this is above the LGC minimum, the contracted auditor recommends sustaining 8 to 9 months as most collections are not realized until after the first quarter of any given year. What COVID has taught us is to be very cost conscience as money is scarce. COVID only affected the last quarter revenues of the current year and may have a greater impact on the upcoming year.

As of the end of the 2020 Fiscal year, our fund balance in the General Fund was 67.55% of our annual expenditures which is equivalent to 8 months. The fund balance amount has reduced in the current year as the Board committed \$800,000 of the General Fund balance for the Police Department Relocation and Fire Department Renovation Projects. This combined with our plans to use Fund Balance (General Fund) in future budgets to help pay for park improvements highlights the need to protect and build Fund Balance every year. In other words, our financial position is strong, but an area that we can continue to build upon as we prepare for the future.

Along with the Fiscal 2022 Budget, we have updated our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). That document is available for review. The CIP details needed capital improvements, which includes equipment purchases that will be made during the year or are expected to occur in the next 5 years. Again, this year, any capital purchase appropriated in the current year budget are shown in the current year of the CIP. We invite and encourage the reader to review our CIP to learn more of what capital purchases are planned in this fiscal year budget and in the future. The CIP also shows how we anticipate these purchases will be paid, whether with cash or using some of the financing methods available to us.

In the Enterprise Fund, as was the case in the Fiscal 2016-2021 Budgets, due to the constraints of the Central Plains Coastal Capacity Use regulations, the Town is required to purchase 100% of its annual water usage from the Martin County Regional Water and Sewer Authority (MCRWASA) at a cost of \$1,170,733.

Our water customers will not see an increase in their usage fees. I am confident to state in this proposed budget, we remain fiscally conservative trying to keep our expenditures in check. We do this in effort to prevent the need for any property tax increases in the General Fund or water and sewer rate increases in the Enterprise fund. This stretching of

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every dollar received continues to put strain on our ability to perform the essential functions of the Town but staff continues to provide those services with great passion and keen interest in making the most of available resources. The rates Williamston customers will pay for water and sewer are:

In-Town Rates		Out of Town Rates	
Water	\$18.65	monthly fixed fee	\$27.00
	\$ 9.50	per thousand gallons	\$11.50
Sewer	\$23.00	monthly fixed fee	\$46.00
	\$ 6.00	per thousand gallons	\$12.00

The Storm Water Utility Fund was created in the 2017 budget year. This fund will initially be used to pay the debt service created from a USDA loan to complete the Skewarkee Drainage project under the CSX overpass on Main Street. It will be financed via a USDA loan and paid back over a 40-year period, The Storm Water revenues appear to be adequate to satisfy the debt payments annually with receipts of \$57,042 in 2017, \$57,038 in 2018, \$57,184 in 2019 and \$52,001 in 2020.

The 2021-2022 budgeted revenue for Storm Water is \$55,000.

The monthly storm water fees are:

\$1.35	Residential Properties
\$3.85	Small Commercial Properties
\$3.60	Large Commercial Properties
\$2.35	Institutional Properties

The storm water fee has to be applied to all customers in-town but cannot be charged to any out-of-town customers. If the reader is interested in the history of this project, much of the detail is located in the Clerk's office at Town Hall.

Conclusion

Each year gets harder to develop a budget that is balanced while meeting the needs of the community. Staff continues to work hard to provide services to the community while seeking cost savings. This budget is submitted as the financial resource guide to accomplish the goals of the Board of Commissioners in service to the citizens of Williamston. It has been thoroughly prepared by staff and diligently reviewed by the Town Board of Commissioners for the purpose of providing services in the most equitable manner possible.

Copies of this ordinance and the attached budget shall be maintained in the office of the Town Clerk of the Town of Williamston, and shall be made available for public inspection.

The budget presented is a balanced departmental budget. I respectfully present this budget on behalf of our united Town of Williamston staff!

Sincerely,
Christina Craft
Interim Town Administrator"

There were no comments regarding the budget submitted prior to the meeting and there were no comments offered by the public.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance 2021-5 FY 2021-2022 Budget

This ordinance is the budget ordinance for the upcoming fiscal year. This budget ordinance was the same as was received and adopted annually. Interim Town Administrator Craft reviewed each section of the budget ordinance. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Coffield, and unanimously passed to approve Ordinance 2021-5 FY 2021-2022 Budget Ordinance.*

Commissioner Moore asked if the \$10,000 that was previously discussed for code enforcement was added. The funds were moved into a cash (reserve) account, and a budget amendment would be needed but the funds would be available.

ORDINANCE 2021-5
 TOWN OF WILLIAMSTON
 FY 2021-2022 BUDGET ORDINANCE

BE IT ORDAINED by the Governing Board of the Town of Williamston, North Carolina:

Section 1: The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the General Fund for the operation of the Town Government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2022, in accordance with the chart of accounts heretofore established for this Town:

Town Board of Commissioners	\$ 64,990
Administration	\$ 64,800
Planning	192,815
Public Buildings	51,122
Police Department	1,928,845
Fire Department	566,584
Rescue/EMS Department	987,119
RRT Department	69,000
Street Department	499,286
Sanitation Department	477,179
Recreation Department	497,570
Cemetery	132,846
Garage	186,488
Cultural	119,000
Debt Retirement	357,283
Economic & Physical Development	170,177
	\$ 6,365,104

Section 2. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the General Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022:

Taxes and Licenses:

Current Year's Property Taxes	\$ 2,708,507
Other Ad Valorem Tax Revenue	930,870
Local Option Sales Tax	1,020,000
Hold Harmless Reimbursements	332,000
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	8,000
Other Taxes and Licenses	451,450

User Charges and Fees:

Recreation Activities	22,900
Cemetery Sales and Fees	65,000
EMS Service Charges	425,000
EMS Medicaid	75,000
Other Charges and Fees	23,000

Intergovernmental Payments:

Total Government and Local Grants	272,277
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Other Income:

Investment Earnings	2,000
Miscellaneous	29,100

Fund Balance Appropriated:	
Undesignated Funds	<u>0</u>

\$6,365,104

Section 3. The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Enterprise Fund for the operation of the water and sewer utilities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2022, in accordance with the chart of accounts heretofore approved for the Town:

Water Operations	\$2,176,850
Sewer Operations	1,130,573
Capital Outlay	473,137
Debt Retirement	515,056
Reserve	-0-
Loans	-0-
Transfer from Other Funds	-0-
Contingencies	<u>-0-</u>

\$ 4,295,616

Section 4. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and ending on June 30, 2022:

Water Charges	\$2,453,000
Sewer Charges	1,571,000
Interest on Investments	6,000
Other Charges and Fees	56,000
Miscellaneous	1,500
Transfer from General Fund	22,614
Installment Financing	185,502
Undesignated Fund Balance	<u>-0-</u>

\$ 4,295,616

Section 5. It is estimated that the following expense will be available in the Storm Water Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and ending on June 30, 2022:

Uncollectible	5,000
Debt Reserve	10,000
Future Project	674
Debt Service Payment	<u>\$39,326</u>

\$ 55,000

Section 6. It is estimated that the following revenue will be available in the Storm Water Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and ending on June 30, 2022:

Storm Water Fees	<u>\$55,000</u>
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\$ 55,000

Section 7. It is estimated that the following expenses will be available in the Powell Bill Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and ending on June 30, 2022:

License Plate – Annexation Street Loan	\$ 81,250
Powell Bill -- Annexation Street Loan	\$38,750
Powell Bill Interest – Annexation Street Loan	\$2,076
Powell Bill – Sweeper Loan & Interest	\$78,476
Powell Bill Services	\$20,000
Powell Bill Paving Projects	\$25,000
Powell Bill – Equipment/Operation	\$6,698
	\$ 252,250

Section 8. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Powell Bill Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, and ending on June 30, 2022:

License Plate Tax	\$81,250
Powell Bill Revenue	\$165,000
Powell Bill Funds Investing Earnings	\$6,000
	\$252,250

Section 9. The Budget Officer is hereby authorized to transfer appropriations as contained herein under the following conditions:

- a. He may transfer amounts between line item expenditures within a department without limitation and without a report being required.
- b. The Budget Officer shall be authorized to re-allocate departmental appropriations among the various objects of expenditures as he believes necessary provided such transfers shall be reported to the Board of Commissioners at its next regular meeting and shall be entered into the minutes.
- c. He may not transfer any amounts between funds, except as approved by the Governing Board in the Budget Ordinance as amended.

Section 10. The Budget Officer may make cash advances between funds for periods not to exceed 60 days without reporting to the Governing Board. Any advances that extend beyond 60 days must be approved by the Board. All advances that will be outstanding at the end of the fiscal year must be approved by the Board.

Section 11. Copies of this Budget Ordinance shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Budget Officer and Finance Officer to be kept on file by them for their discretion in the disbursement of funds.

Adopted this 26th day of April, 2021.

Adopt 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Interim Town Administrator Craft reviewed the CIP book that was presented to each Commissioner for review. She stated the Board would receive the budget book like this in June of 2020. The CIP reviewed details of any capital expenses for the next five years. *It was moved by Commissioner Knox, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to adopt the 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan.*

Resolution 2021-4 Setting Water and Sewer Rates for Fiscal 2021/2022

Typically a resolution like this would be done with a rate increase. The rates are not increasing, but staff is requesting this resolution be adopted for paperwork purposes, even though there would be no rate increase. *It was moved by Commissioner Chesson, seconded by Commissioner Knox, and unanimously passed to adopt Resolution 2021-4 Setting Water and Sewer Rates for Fiscal 2021/2022.*

**Resolution 2021-4
Establishing Rates and Fees for Water and Sewer Related Services**

WHEREAS, the Town of Williamston from time to time sets rates and fees for use of the town's water and sewer service; and

WHEREAS, the Town now desires to set the following rates and fees;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town of Williamston Board of Commissioners that the following rates and fees be set:

Water Rates:

	In Town	Out of Town
Base Rate	\$18.65/Month	\$27.00/Month
Usage Charge	\$ 9.50/1,000 Gallons	\$11.50/1,000 Gallons

Sewer Rates:

	In Town	Out of Town
Base Rate	\$23.00/Month	\$46.00/Month
Usage Charge	\$ 6.00/1,000 Gallons	\$12.00/1,000 Gallons

Water Deposit:

If tenant owns and resides at the property	No Deposit Required
If property is leased or rented	\$175.00

Water Tap-on Connection Fees:

	In Town	Out of Town
For one ¾" Service	\$450.00	\$450.00
For one 1" Service	\$550.00	\$550.00
For one 1½" Service	\$950.00	\$950.00
For one 2" Service	Cost plus 20%	Cost plus 25%
For one 4" Service	Cost plus 20%	Cost plus 25%

Inspection Fee: \$20.00

\$20.00/hr. for construction projects

Late Charge: \$25.00

Lock-Out Charge: \$20.00

Meter Removal: \$40.00

Lock Replacement: \$ 30.00

Tampering with Public Utilities: \$100.00

(hydrants, valves or devices)

Reinstallation Fees:

- a. If the reinstallation occurs within 60 days after the cut-off, the fee shall be \$40.00.
- b. If the reinstallation occurs after 60 days and within 365 days after the cut-off, the fee will be \$80.00.
- c. If the reinstallation occurs after 365 days after the cut-off, the customer will be charged the original connection charges specified in the Water Tap-on Connection Fee schedule above.

Permit Fees:

	In Town	Out-of-Town
Permit to install new domestic water connection	\$ *	\$ *
Permit to reconstruct private service piping	\$ no charge	\$ no charge
Permit to close abandoned service	\$ no charge	\$ no charge

*included in Connection Charge.

Miscellaneous Fees:

Meters will be tested at the request of the user upon payment to the Town of \$10, provided that if the meter is found to over-register beyond 5 per centum of the correct volume, no charge will be made.

The above rates shall become effective on July 1, 2020. Any rates or fees not specifically addressed in this resolution but were in place and effective at the time of adoption of this resolution shall remain in effect and unchanged.

BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the water use fees and rates may be modified from time to time by resolution of the Town of Williamston Board of Commissioners.

ADOPTED THIS 26th DAY OF APRIL, 2021.

Resolution 2021-3 Setting Stormwater Fees for Fiscal 2021/2022

There would be no increase in fees, but staff would like the Board to adopt this resolution. *It was moved by Commissioner Rodgers, seconded by Commissioner Moore, and unanimously passed to adopt Resolution 2021-3 Setting Stormwater Rates for Fiscal 2021/2022.*

**Resolution 2021-3
Establishing Rates for Storm Water Related Services**

WHEREAS, the Town of Williamston Board of Commissioners (Town) has established a Stormwater Utility Fund by adopting Ordinance 2016-86; and

WHEREAS, by adopting Ordinance 2016-86 certain storm water categories have been established and defined for billing purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Town wishes to establish initial rates for these categories and from time to time will amend these rates as needed and authorized within Ordinance 2016-86; and

WHEREAS, the Town held a public hearing to consider proposed storm water rates at a duly called regular meeting on June 6, 2016;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town of Williamston Board of Commissioners that the following rates and fees will continue to be set:

Stormwater Rates:

Residential	\$1.35/Month
Small Commercial	\$3.85/Month
Large Commercial	\$3.60/Month
Institutional	\$2.35/Month

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these rates will be charged to all in-town properties and billed on the Town's Utility Bills each month; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the storm water fee shall be the first to be relieved upon any payment of said Utility Bill and any remaining payment after relief of the Stormwater fee being applied to the Sewer and then to water in

that order. Any unpaid amount of any of these fees shall subject the utility customer to late fees and penalties as defined within the Water and Sewer ordinances of the Towns.

BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED, there is no increase in stormwater fees in the 2020/2021 Budget. Any rates or fees not specifically addressed in this resolution but were in place and effective at the time of adoption of this resolution shall remain in effect and unchanged. The stormwater fees and rates may be modified from time to time by resolution of the Town of Williamston Board of Commissioners.

ADOPTED THIS 26th DAY OF APRIL, 2021.

Consideration of Bids for Consulting Services for CDBG-NR Grant

After approval from the Board, an RFP was issued for consulting services for the CDBG-NR grant that was received by the Town of Williamston. Two proposals were received – one from Adams Company Inc, (\$72,000) and one from LKC Engineering, PLLC (\$77,000). Several factors were used in evaluating and scoring the submitted proposals, including 1) general qualifications, competence and reputation of Firm or Individual consultant, 2) Prior CDBG Housing Grant experience of firm or individual consultant, 3) qualifications of actively involved staff, 4) availability to address local needs, 5) availability, and 6) cost of services. Based on the scoring summary, staff recommended the contract be awarded to Adams Company, Inc.

Mr. Ben Jones and Mr. Floyd Adams were available for any questions from the Board. Commissioner Chesson asked what the time frame would be for starting and estimated completion, if the Adams Company was awarded the contract. Mr. Adams stated staff would proceed on immediately to get documents taken care of. There were two to three conditions that would require immediate attention. Staff had to ensure there would be any environmental or wildlife concerns before proceeding with any work on homes and having any funds released from the State. Commissioner Moore expressed his concerns about the budget of the project, and the biggest concern was the current cost of lumber. Mr. Adams stated staff was anticipating to still stay within the project budget, even with those concerns. The grant laid out a 36-month timeframe for completion, but Mr. Adams was hoping for a completion date within 2 years of starting any projects.

The Mayor entertained a motion to approve the consideration of bid for consulting services for CDBG-NR grant. Commissioner Chesson made a motion, Commissioner Moore seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Consideration for Annual Fun Fest

Mr. Braddy stated the annual Fun Fest was scheduled to take place in the Rose's parking lot, as it normally occurred once or twice per year. This request was a formality in allowing the festival to take place. The festival was scheduled for operation on April 29th, April 30th, May 1st and 2nd, 2021. The festival would consist of amusement rides. The paperwork provided for approval was needed to issue the proper permits for the festival. Commissioner Rodgers expressed ongoing concerns about COVID, and if there were any concerns about that during the festival. Mr. Joseph Snider stated staff would be following the Governor's orders related to amusements and COVID restrictions. The Interim Town Administrator pointed out the information related to these concerns for the Board. Attorney Sutton pointed out additional requirements for any live performances, but Mr. Snider reported there would be no live performances. *Commissioner Moore motioned, Commissioner Coffield seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously to approve the Fun Fest.*

Consideration of Martin County Arts Council Request

The Interim Town Administrator reported the Martin County Arts Council previously held a concert in the street around two years ago. In order to have power to the stage, the Arts Council had requested to use the Town's power/electrical junction. The Arts Council reimbursed the Town for the electricity that was used. The Arts Council has another concert scheduled for April 2021 and was requesting to use the electricity again under the same conditions as the last time. *Commissioner Knox motioned, Commissioner Chesson seconded, and the motion to approve the Arts Council request was unanimously approved.*

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) – Personnel

At 6:07 p.m., *Commissioner Coffield made a motion to go into closed session, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6)-Personnel; Commissioner Knox seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.*

At 7:30 p.m., *Commissioner Chesson motioned, Commissioner Rodgers seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved to go out of closed session back into open session.*

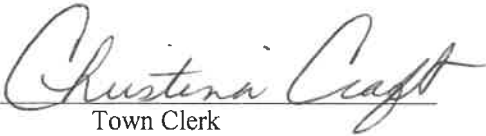
Clarification of Motion

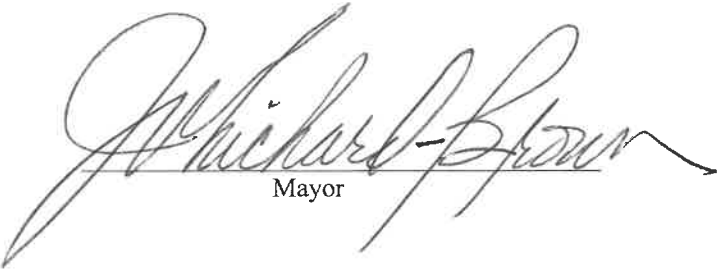
Regarding the consideration of bids for consulting services for CDBG-NR grant, it was noted that the Board did not include which firm they selected in the original motion. *Commissioner Chesson motioned, Commissioner Moore seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved to award the bid for consulting services for the CDBG-NR grant to The Adams Company, Inc.*

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:


Town Clerk


Mayor