



**MINUTES
WATAUGA CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET RETREAT MEETING
HURST CONFERENCE CENTER
1601 CAMPUS DRIVE
HURST TX 76054
SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2023
8:00 AM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Arthur L. Miner called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

ROLL CALL

The meeting convened with the following members present:

Arthur L. Miner
Lovie Downey
Pat Shelbourne
Tom Snyder

Andrew Neal
Malissa Minucci
Mark Taylor
Jan Hill

and
Joshua Jones
Linda Proskey

Mayor
Mayor Pro Tem/Council Member Place 3
Council Member Place 1
Council Member Place 2 (Absent without
notice)
Council Member Place 4
Council Member Place 5 (Absent with notice)
Council Member Place 6
Council Member Place 7

City Manager
City Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Requests for public comment were received.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ACTION ITEMS

No Requests for public testimony were received.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Discuss and provide directions to the City Manager on the upcoming fiscal year 2023-2024 budget.

Joshua Jones, City Manager, Presented the item. He is looking for the council's input and direction for the upcoming budget. They discussed the following topics:

- a) Grants – Community Block Grant Programs, Sidewalk, and Safety School Grants. The Council would like to have a report as to what grants are available and which ones we are applying for.
- b) Finance - Maintaining sound financial management practices and bond rating.
- c) Economic Development Budget will be discussed at the WEDC meeting next week. We are working on the development of a tax abatement policy. They discussed businesses looking to come to Watauga, Obstacles that the city faces with franchise businesses, and Retail Coach.
- d) Public Safety- Non-enforcement efforts, lighting options, speed limits and speeding, and citizen complaints. Staffing levels and the lack of qualified applicants, the need to increase the presence of officers, enforcement rather than service, and the facility.
- e) Code Compliance- Beautification of the city, weeds along curbs, the height of grass, fences, vehicles, trash, and debris in yards and driveways. State regulations on how long cities must wait before they can do anything.
- f) Fleet – Reviewing the take-home vehicles policy and vehicle usage.
- g) Public Works-Street Maintenance program, short-term rentals, pool rentals, rental sheds. They reviewed upcoming Capital Improvement projects, sidewalk repair, smart water meters, and street maintenance programs. Council would like a calendar developed and posted on the website when streets are scheduled for maintenance. Improve the carbon footprint, EV, and a solar farm. Staffing issues
- h) Current bills in the state legislature and how they will affect what the city can do.
- i) Library-Non-Watauga citizens visiting and the impact on the revenue for the businesses in the city. Facility
- j) Animal Services-investing in the facility, expansion, staffing issues, turnover rate, and the needs of the animals.
- k) Fire-need for a station on the westside of city

Recessed

Mayor Miner called a recess at 11:03 a.m.

Reconvened

May 13, 2023, Council Retreat Minutes-page 2

Mayor Miner reconvened the meeting at 11:13 a.m.

Discussion continued

- l) Citizen survey budgeted for this year.
- m) Watauga 101 Citizens Academy-virtual verses in person or combination, and timing, the minimum amount of people need to hold the academy, and touring facilities.
- n) City brand, social media
- o) Human Resources-Staff policy changes, retention, informal surveys on composition, flex schedules, pay-time off program the council would like evaluated and possible workshop.
- p) Evaluate the need for broadband access.

RECESSED

Mayor Miner called a recess at 11:59

RECONVENED

Mayor Miner reconvened the meeting at 12:40

Discussion continued

- q) Update and review ARPA funds. All funds must be obligated by next year and spent by 2026. Reviewed what the council previously approved and where it stands, the CIP projects, lead pipe identify personnel, leave bank reduction, appreciation pay, recruitment incentives, police special unit program, PPE for fire, remote access devices, and generator.
- r) New and expanded items requested total is 1.6 million. Reviewed what each department has requested in their budget, but Mr. Jones, City Manager, explained the items are what has been asked for, but an analysis has yet to be done, and nothing has been approved.

The Councilmembers asked Mr. Jones to get the answers to the following questions when he reviews the departmental budgets with the directors.

Mark Taylor asked if we are recouping the cost of the three paramedics we received from the Safer Grant and why we need three additional paramedics.

Councilmember Hill wanted to be sure if additional fire personnel are hired, there are enough showers and the things required for additional people.

Councilmember Downey wants to know why the bailiff position needs to go to full-time. Mayor Miner was interested in knowing the same.

Councilmember Shelbourne wants to know whether it is 3 or 9 additional paramedics that the fire department is asking for.

Councilmember Taylor wants to know why the need for additional armor storage.

- s) Homestead Exemption discussed the tax rate, the average home values, and the value of homes within the neighboring cities. The sales tax revenue the business brings in. The cost of the current tax relief to the city and shifting the tax burden. Future growth of the city. The results on the fund balance. Bills that are currently being considered and how they will affect the city and the ability to raise revenue.
- t) The Council discussed the benefits of the Economic Development Corporation to the city.
- u) Advance meter infrastructure, utility rate study
- v) Capital Outlay Plan – Spoke about pay as you go instead of debt issuance.
- w) Capital Improvement Projects

RECESSED

Mayor Miner called for a recess at 14:04 PM

RECONVENED

Mayor Miner reconvened the meeting at 14:12 PM

Discussion continued

Josh Jones, City Manager, asked what projects and issues the Council sees that they would like to be looked at for this or future budgets.

Councilmember Downey-Animal Shelter, Take home vehicles., Fire Department, Redevelopment, Food trucks, community policing, rental properties. Discussion on bond for library and police department building.

Councilmember Shelbourne-Code enforcement, eco-friendly water conservation, property maintenance, and pride in the city, Ordinances need to be reviewed.

Councilmember Taylor-Would like to look at the library staffing, new facility, programs, and programs at the recreation center. He would like a 20-mph speed limit throughout the city and a Memorial Tree program.

Councilmember Neal-Employee pay raises and more sidewalks, a way to connect to trails, and a pedestrian bridge away to cross 377. Increase tree canopy coverage, solar farm.

Mayor Miner- the number of vehicles the city has, combining the functions/program of the Library and Recreation Center. He wants the police trailer moved around to identify the average speed. Mr. Jones suggested a live document could be created and publish the data on the streets' speed and rotate streets each month.

Councilmember Taylor wants to know the cost of the flashing speed limit signs for capturing the data on our main roads.

Councilmember Hill, Staff and evaluate salaries for the lower paying positions that we have problems keeping. She would like to see the Veteran's Flag program. Also, to purchase the horse farm property to build a park and nature/visitor center.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting at 14:50 pm

Approved: this 7 day of Aug, 2023

Signed: this 7 day of Aug, 2023

ATTEST: Linda Proskey /s/
Linda Proskey, City Secretary

APPROVED:

Arthur L. Miner /s/
Arthur L. Miner, Mayor



NOTE: Original Audio and Video Recording of this meeting is preserved and maintained by the City Secretary's Office