

Town of Spring Lake
Board of Aldermen Workshop
Municipal Building
300 Ruth Street
Spring Lake, NC 28390

January 12, 2009

MINUTES

5:00

p.m.

The Spring Lake Board of Aldermen held a workshop in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Municipal Complex with Mayor Ethel T. Clark presiding.

Board Members Present: Mayor Pro-Tem James O'Garra
Alderman Richard Higgins
Alderwoman McCoy
Alderwoman Sutherland

Alderman Napoleon Hogans was absent.

Others Present: Larry Faison, Town Manager
Alvin Brown, Police Chief
Allen Coats, Finance Director
Debbie Disbrow, Human Resources Officer
Robert Doberstein, Fire Chief
Paul Hoover, Inspections Director
Ken Metcalf, Recreation Director
Tom Spinks, Planning Director
Rhonda Webb, Town Clerk

The purpose for this workshop was to discuss the Police Department transformation action plan and the PARTF application project funding options and priorities.

Police Department Transformation Action Plan.

The goal for this topic was to provide the Board with an overview of the Police Department and gain understanding on the level of service the Board desires to fund in the upcoming budget year.

Mr. Faison stated that he is requesting Board guidance on the service level the Board desires so that he can work toward incorporating it into the budget.

Chief Brown gave an overview of the Police Department's vision and mission. He explained the personnel situation in the department. He stated that the department's policy manual has been reviewed and implemented. The detectives have a robust academic training program and are consistently collaborating with other agencies. They have created a new program called "Team Enforcement" efforts which provides opportunities for continued collaboration with other agencies. They participate in gang awareness briefings. The uniform officers and detectives continue to respond to all calls

for police service and conduct follow-up work.

It was questioned if the Spring Lake Police Department is going to Cumberland County to train with the Sheriff's Department. They are training but not along side the Sheriff's Deputies.

Chief Brown stated that the department still needs six police officer and equipment, six police vehicles with equipment, a K-9 unit/drug enforcement officer with equipment, a SWAT team needs to be implemented and the sub-station needs to be renovated. He estimates that the cost for all of these is \$614,000.00.

He proposed several possible courses of action to meet these needs. The largest cost is personnel and vehicles. Mr. Faison proposed that spreading the needs out over several years would make it easier to achieve.

Mr. Faison stated that he and the Police Chief met with the District Attorney to discuss the plan and felony investigation authority for property crimes. The District Attorney feels that the standard that Spring Lake should meet is accreditation. Mr. Faison stated that setting that as a standard is prejudicial since there is no other municipality in the County that is required to meet that standard. Judge Keever will be requested to support our plan and request.

Alderman Higgins expressed concern about the amount of money needed, the status of the economy and the fact that we may not be able to handle the costs in the near future. He wants staff to consider "outside the box" ideas to help remedy our problem. He suggested sharing vehicles as a way to help save money.

This plan covers what is needed to adequately cover the Police Department's patrol requirements. At the present time the Police Department is understaffed.

Alderman Sutherland questioned if the Officer's we have now are completely trained and questioned if they are able to go to training. Chief Brown stated that as often as scheduling is possible they are going to training. She also asked about the interaction between the citizens and the Police Department. Chief Brown stated that the Community Watch meetings are one way of interacting with citizens. Alderman Sutherland suggested that the Police Department work harder to interact with the citizens. Mayor Clark reminded everyone of how the Officer's used to walk Main Street and talk with the businesses. Bicycles were suggested as a tool to help with community policing. Chief Brown stated that this is where the additional personnel are critical. Alderman Sutherland expressed concern about response time and answering calls.

The Police Department works under four shifts with a supervisor and three officers per shift.

The Detectives are following up on all the misdemeanor cases that occur in Spring Lake.

They also help follow up on some felony cases when requested by the Sheriff's Department.

((A copy of the Police Department's PowerPoint presentation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment one.)

PARTF Application Project Funding Options and Priorities.

The goal of this topic was to provide the Board with information concerning the PARTF grant application and options that are available.

Mr. Metcalf stated that we are quickly approaching the deadline for the grant.

Mr. Coats advised that the LGC is somewhat concerned about the Town's fund balance. He stated that they are not completely comfortable with where we are but they gave no indication one way or the other as to whether they would allow us to borrow funds to meet the Town's portion of the application.

Mr. Metcalf explained the scope of the application.

Mr. Coats provided the Board with an overview of the historical trends and five-year projected trends for property tax levy, local option sales tax and other revenues. He also provided expense trends for personnel, operating, debt service and capital outlay. The Manager stated that the information presented is only reasonable assumptions. The Pope/Fort Bragg annexation is not factored into these estimates. Mr. Coats advised the Board that expenses are projected to exceed revenues this year. Sales tax revenues are down and Powell Bill money came in less than expected.

Alderman Higgins requested information on how much revenue the Town gained by adding the vehicle tax. Alderwoman Sutherland stated that we need to explore impact fees. Mr. Faison stated that impact fees will be discussed in an upcoming workshop.

Mr. Faison gave an overview of what he anticipates to fund in the upcoming budget and also gave an overview of items that will need to be addressed soon. He intends to program not less than \$150K for Capital Outlay (vehicles.) He stated that the budget is the plan that puts forth the Board's public policy and finances those efforts. He stated that the un-programmed items are suggestive and he does not expect to have resources to support them.

Mr. Faison briefly reviewed the staff's initiatives from the last budget cycle.

Mr. Metcalf explained three options to the Board and stated that staff recommends consideration of option 2. He stated that assuming we received the PARTF grant at the maximum of \$500,000.00 the Town will assume approximately \$677,000.00. He recommended a 20 year loan at 4%. The debt payment would be about \$50,000.00. It

would also require a tax increase of 1 ½ cents and would require LGC concurrence with the loan application.

Mr. Faison stated that our fund balance is woefully low. His recommended priorities are to improve and sustain fund balances, fund the sustainment of operations and services and fund initiatives through adjustment of taxes, fees and grants. He stated that the "windfall" from the Pope/Fort Bragg annexation barely addresses and supports current operations.

The Board's consensus was to proceed with option 2 for the PARTF grant. The Manager requested that the Board make an official motion in open session as to their desires. He asked the Board to be thinking about how they wish to be involved in the budget. The Board stated that they prefer workshops.

The meeting ended at 6:51 p.m.

Rhonda D. Webb, CMC
Town Clerk

ATTEST:

Ethel T. Clark
Mayor