



**TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024 – 3:00 P.M.**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Holden Beach, North Carolina met for a Special Meeting on Friday, April 12, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. Present were Mayor J. Alan Holden; Mayor Pro Tem Tom Myers; Commissioners Rick Smith, Page Dyer and Rick Paarfus; Town Manager David W. Hewett; Town Clerk Heather Finnell; Assistant Town Manager Christy Ferguson; Finance Officer Daniel McRaney; Fiscal Operations Supervisor Margaret Lancaster; Building Official Tim Evans; Police Chief Jeremy Dixon; and Fire Chief Doug Todd. Commissioner Tracey Thomas was unable to attend the meeting.

Mayor Holden called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cane Faircloth spoke on behalf of the Lockwood Inlet Association. He expressed their support of accepting the grant for the dredging of the Lockwood Folly Inlet.

Sylvia Pate spoke in support of accepting the grant for the dredging of the Lockwood Folly Inlet.

Brent Shaver urged the Board to create a situation that can have a fire station that can be manned 24/7.

FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

Chief Todd reviewed staffing in the Fire Department. He provided information on his budget and explained fire fees. If the Fire Department goes to 24/7 staffing, the current contract will need to be amended. They also have contracts with the county and Varnamtown. There is a seven-person board that governs the department. It is made up of community members and members of the department. Tri-Beach Fire Department has three stations. Chief Todd provided information on their response area, statistics, equipment and the rating system.

Chief Todd explained staffing the island 24/7 would not help with insurance costs, but it will help with response times. The potential impact of new development was discussed.

Sleeping quarters would be needed for overnight staffing. They would need a new building for that. The cost of a building would be the responsibility of the Town. He could work with the Town on specifications. Building Official Evans provided feedback on building a station at the current location. Chief Todd provided information on certifications and upcoming proposed changes to fire departments.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON WATER RESOURCES' GRANT FOR LOCKWOOD FOLLY DREDGING

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said the resolution to apply for the grant, a survey that shows the condition of the inlet when the Corps did the survey in March, a grant application and a budget amendment are before the Board. She talked about potential obstacles to the project. The state requested a preview of the application. On page 8 of the packet, they asked that the end contract date be changed to November. The final application will be updated to reflect that if the Board moves forward. Since it is time sensitive, Assistant Town Manager Ferguson asked that if the Board would like to move forward, they make the motion to submit the resolution and the grant paperwork to the state and give authority to the town manager to do all follow-on paperwork with contracting. That would mean it wouldn't come back to the Board when it is time to sign the grant and the contract with the dredger, Town Manager Hewett would sign off on it.

Motion by Commissioner Dyer to accept the resolution and the budget amendment and also give the town manager authority to execute all follow-on paperwork with contracts; second by Commissioner Paarfus.

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson explained if we do not get the grant, we would not follow through with the contract. Mayor Pro Tem Myers said it is his understanding that it is the Corps' legal responsibility to keep the inlet open. Somehow, we are taking the lead on the project, Oak Island isn't contributing and everything is an emergency. He is hoping that moving forward, it can be planned for ahead of time. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said the Town does plan ahead. As part of the Board's advocacy efforts this year we asked for money to go into the Corps' budget for operation and dredging. If the federal government puts money into the budget, we can be on their schedule but we are still at their mercy on when they schedule to come here. How to proceed was discussed.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Town Manager Hewett explained there is a lot of coordination involved in this project and he is unsure if it will get done.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Town Manager Hewett explained General Fund Revenue estimates are before the Board. For this exercise, the amount under ad valorem tax shows what it would be at the same tax rate as the current year. The tax rate, collection rate and the listed revenues were discussed.

Occupancy taxes and interest in the BPART Fund were reviewed. Parking revenue and grant revenue were also discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Smith to adjourn at 4:18 p.m.; second by Commissioner Dyer; approved by unanimous vote.

J. Alan Holden, Mayor

ATTEST:

Heather Finnell, Town Clerk