

TOWN OF ELIZABETHTOWN
2025 ANNUAL BUDGET RETREAT
February 25, 2025

The Elizabethtown Town Council met for its Annual Budget Retreat on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at the Mac Campbell, Sr. Terminal Building, 466 Airport Road. Those attending included Mayor Sylvia Campbell, Mayor Pro Tem Rufus Lloyd, Council Members Rich Glenn, Paula Greene, Bobby Kinlaw, Ricky Leinwand and Herman Lewis. Others in attendance: Town Manager Dane Rideout, Town Attorney Goldston Womble (attended a portion of the open session and all of the Closed Session), Assistant Town Manager Pat DeVane, Planning Director Rusty Worley, Finance Director Sharon Penny, Public Works/Engineering Services Director Steve Duffy and Public Works Technician John Duffy, Fire Chief Hollis Freeman, Police Chief Mark McMichael and Town Clerk Juanita Hester. NCDOT District Engineer Ken Clark was in attendance to give presentation on NCDOT projects happening in Town.

Ms. Brenda Clark, Town resident, attended the Budget Retreat morning session. There were no representatives from the Press.

Before the 10:00 a.m. opening of the Budget Retreat meeting, Council members and staff enjoyed a variety of light refreshments and coffee.

Welcome:

At 10:00 a.m., Mayor Sylvia Campbell opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. She recognized new Police Chief Mark McMichael and new Town Council Member Bobby Kinlaw and welcomed them aboard. Mayor then called upon Mayor Pro Tem Rufus Lloyd to give the invocation. A request was made to keep Planning Director Rusty Worley in our prayers.

Agenda Adoption:

Council Member Herman Lewis, seconded by Council Member Paula Greene, moved to adopt the Budget Retreat agenda (Unanimous).

Town Manager Updates & Project Overview:

Town Manager Dane Rideout noted that guidance/direction was being sought from Town Council on how to prepare the upcoming Fiscal Year budget based on the material that was being presented at this meeting. The Budget Committee consists of Council Members Paula Greene, Rich Glenn and Bobby Kinlaw. Both Town Manager Dane Rideout and Planning Director Rusty Worley then gave updates on the Town projects taking place at the Airport.

Budget Presentation/Discussion:

Finance Director Sharon Penny's presentation provided a snapshot of revenue and expenditures and increases for FY 25-26 that were currently known. For Assumptions/Recommendations/Discussion Items, such included for the Revenue items: An increase in grease trap fees 3% and a 3% increase in water and sewer rates to maintain pace of inflation based on recommendation from School of Government Rate Study of April 2022. For Expense items: Recommended 2% COLA. Council Member/Budget Committee Member Rich Glenn suggested a 3% COLA for employees. The remaining expense items included the purchase of three police vehicles and computers, to reinstate the frozen Police Department position and additional firefighters (three positions).

At this time, Mayor Campbell asked Mayor Pro Tem Rufus Lloyd to give the blessing before the group shared in the delicious lunch prepared by Sarah Gore Events and Catering.

Working Lunch Presentations:

Ken Clark, PE, NCDOT District Engineer, Division of Highways reported that the goal for completion of the new bridge over the Cape Fear River is June 18, 2025. At the end of March 2025, bridge traffic will shift. Other updates covered traffic signal upgrades, ADA/Pedestrian improvements, Airport/Industrial Park projects and Pavement Condition projects.

Presentation: Fire Chief Hollis Freeman - Fire Department

Chief Freeman's presentation included the 2024 Call Volume, Current Status of Members (33 members), the department wishes to provide a more standardized training program for new and current members, the department's capital items included refurbishment of Engine 554 and Ladder 55 (may consider replacement), the purchase of medium-duty Brush Truck or multi-purpose vehicle, Fire Department will continue to purchase Turnout Gear (4 sets of PPE Turnout Gear per year) and will look for new avenues of funding. As reported by Chief Freeman, members of the Elizabethtown Fire Department will be participating in Aircraft Firefighting training.

Presentation: Police Chief Mark McMichael - Police Department

The Test of Police Efficiency is the Absence of Crime & Disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it. Chief McMichael shared this statement with Council and noted the importance of it in the way he operates the Police Department. The Police Chief's presentation covered community-oriented policing, statistics of reportable crimes 2023 vs. 2024 for Group A and Group B offenses, with the Police Department Records Management System, there is an accurate view of when and where calls peak in the community, briefed on the modified investigations division schedule for enhanced support to include the key changes and the benefits of the modified schedule. Briefly noted the current fleet of department vehicles, information outlined the current years of service for the Police Department officers; how the Flock Safety system is working for the Town; and the addition of a School Resource Officer position which will be fully funded through the school system with no cost to the Town except for the provision of necessary law enforcement equipment for the new position. The department's FY

2025-2026 requests: to support a COLA and merit-based raises in order to maintain retention, three patrol vehicles, and laptop replacements for patrol.

Presentation: Director of Public Services/Engineering Services Steve Duffy (WWTP Update/Public Works/IT)

For IT, Steve Duffy noted that the Elizabethtown Police Department is no longer part of the County System – on the Town’s network now. He noted other IT projects for 2025 to include Telephone System Upgrade to a Software Based Platform and Surveillance and Access Control for Community Center and Airport. His presentation further outlined departmental concerns for the Public Works Department, Water Department and Wastewater concerns/projects. At this time, Steve Duffy and John Duffy gave a GIS presentation for Council which included the City Cemetery process of identification of graves. In addition, water data has been migrated into the GIS system with other projects being worked into the system to include the Lead Copper Inventory project, stormwater projects, and sign replacement. For the sign replacement project, Mr. Duffy’s plan is to replace ¼ of the Town’s signage each year.

Closed Session

A motion was made by Council Member Rich Glenn, and seconded by Council Member Ricky Leinwand, to enter into Closed Session for the purposes of NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) – Attorney-Client Privilege and NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4) – Economic Development (Unanimous).

Return to Open Session

To leave Closed Session with return to Open Session, a motion was made by Council Member Bobby Kinlaw and seconded by Council Member Ricky Leinwand (Unanimous).

In Open Session, Mayor reported there was no action taken.

Closing Remarks & Council Guidance:

Mayor Sylvia Campbell stated this had been a great day and commented that Council Members learned a lot from the Budget Retreat presentations made.

With there being no further business to conduct, Council Member Herman Lewis, seconded by Council Member Bobby Kinlaw, made a motion to adjourn the meeting (4:00 p.m.) (Unanimous).

Sylvia Campbell, Mayor