



Town Council
Annual Budget Retreat Minutes
February 25, 2025, 9:00 am

Mayor O'Cain called the Laurel Park Annual Budget Retreat to order at 9:00 am on February 25, 2025, at 1860 Hebron Rd Hendersonville, NC 28739.

The following attended in person:

- Mayor O'Cain
- Mayor Pro Tem Hansen
- Commissioner Banta
- Commissioner Bonnema
- Commissioner Bridges
- Town Manager Reeves
- Town Clerk Banks
- Finance Officer Kidd
- Police Chief Trotter
- Assistant Police Chief Capps
- Public Works Superintendent Johnson
- Crew Leader Pearce
- Parks Director Hensley
- Finance Consultant Burleson
- Facilitator Emory

Guest attending:

- Edward Eaves

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor O'Cain moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Hansen requested an additional topic regarding the SBA tower. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Town Manager Reeves welcomed everyone and introduced Facilitator Mr. Emory.

REVIEW OF MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

To begin the review Mr. Emory read the Town's Vision and it is as follows:

TOWN VISION

The Town of Laurel Park values its people, its strong sense of community, and its mountain environment. The Town envisions a future where balanced decision-making results in a quality community where people have choices. Our Town is responsive to the needs of residents today and adapts to serve our neighbors of tomorrow.

All members of Council decided to leave the vision as is. Mr. Emory then moved to the Town Mission. It reads as follows:

TOWN MISSION

At the Town of Laurel Park, we focus every day on supplying quality, efficient services and transparent government to remember our past, respect our present, and enhance the future of citizens.

All members of the Council discussed changing the verbiage from citizens to residents. Making the final mission as follows:

TOWN MISSION

At the Town of Laurel Park, we focus every day on supplying quality, efficient services, and transparent government to remember our past, respect our present, and enhance the future for residents.

Mr. Emory then moved to Town Values.

TOWN VALUES

Quality - To ensure all activities and services meet excellence.

Community - Foster a feeling of fellowship within our town, as to facilitate and strengthen common attitudes, interests, and goals.

Prestige - To be an example for our citizens, neighbors, and region.

Sustainability - To provide sustainability for the town, through its environment, culture, and finances.

Transparency - To foster trust between government and citizens through active, honest communication.

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FY26 Goal Setting

Build back better (Hurricane Helene)
Roads and Infrastructure (culverts, shoulders etc.)
Better Community Communication
Better understanding of Utility Projects
Successful Centennial Celebration
Shoulder/Ditches/Culverts
Storm Water Ordinance
Town operations – inhouse -vs- outsourcing
Self-evaluation of Town Council
Disaster Financial Strategy
Ecusta Trail/ Hwy 64
Ecusta Crossing
Maintain active communication with DOT (Hwy 64) and good relations.
Solve FEMA funding/budgeting
Town property/SBA Tower

Break

Facilitator Mr. Emory called for a 10-minute break at 10:30 am. Resumed at 10:40 am

Review Financials

Financial Consultant Burleson gave the Council an overview of the Town’s FY25 financial review.

FY26 Revenue Projections

The Town Council began the review by going over the revenues. They had questions regarding the following financial line items:

- Taxes/Current Year
- Motor Vehicle Tax - HC
- Motor Vehicle Tax - DMV

Per Finance Officer Kidd the numbers listed on financials above are directly from the Henderson County Tax Office

Town Council asked if we could keep an eye on the following line items:

| | <u>FY25 Budget</u> | <u>Actual as of 1/31/25</u> | <u>FY26 Request</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ABC Funds - | \$75,000 | \$96,022 | \$100,000 |
| ABC Funds Police - | \$10,000 | \$9,887 | \$10,000 |

Next, the Town Council reviewed the Council Budget.

- a. Commissioner Bridges wanted to increase Legal Fees from \$5,000 to \$10,000.
- b. Mayor O’Cain and Commissioner Bridges wanted to reduce the Stipend Fee from \$18,000 to \$15,000.
- c. Town Council requested a to create a financial line item for Training/Travel for Council members for \$1,500. Mayor O’Cain stated it was time to phase out Enterprise for Town Fleet. All Council members agreed.

When reviewing the Administration account # 10-4120, the Council did not see any concerns with FY26 request. There was a discussion of the need for one or two fireproof fire cabinets for the Town Clerk’s Office.

Lunch

Facilitator Jim Emory called for a 30-minute lunch break at 12:00. Resumed at 12:30 pm.

Public Works Presentation

FY2025 Accomplishments

- All staff completed NC Pesticide Board continuing education hours.
- Completed 1.25 miles of road shoulder repairs with ditch reshaping used over 85 tons of material (stone, dirt, seed)
- Staff worked safely and efficiently clearing roadways from storm debris throughout Hurricane Helene
- Equipment training for new staff (mini excavator, tractors, backhoe)
- Snow removal training for new employees

FY2026 Goals

- Chainsaw safety for new employees and current.
- Flagger recertification/certification training
- Storm water inspection and maintenance certification for some staff
- Pesticide license for new employees
- Continuing with road shoulder repairs
- Possibly plant wildflowers in various natural areas around town. (Town right of way)

Brandon Johnson also requested funding to purchase a Turbo Turf Brine Maker 450-gallon, Turf Turbo 300-gallon gas brine sprayer w/ 2 lane boom and control, On Demand water heater for brine making system and a Meyer Cross Conveyor to help assist with road repair. He also asks to replace the 30-year-old generator with a new 22kw Generac generator, and upgrade bunk house generator transfer switch to an automatic switch.

Parks Department

FY2025 Accomplishments

- We had a successful tree lighting ceremony thanks to the Friends of Laurel Park and the staff at Town Hall.
- Worked with volunteers and the P&G Committee to add beauty and pollinators to our green spaces.
- Trained a new employee for the department – she is a terrific addition!
- Planted new plants, edging, mulching, trimming bushes, pruning trees, and maintaining stone dust paths.
- Maintained Laurel Green creek restoration.
- Kept up with all the trash and litter, throughout all the parks in town.

FY2026 Goals

- Paver walks and wheelchair access to Jump Off Rock.
- Post and beam storage/garage at Rhododendron Lake Park.

Police Presentation

FY2025 Accomplishments

- Made training available to all officers.
- Participated in NC Governors Highway Safety grant programs.
- Maintain crime control.
- Developed and improved property and evidence room procedures.
- Assisted HPD and HCSO with major events.
- Hosted events with FOLP, VHFD and HCS.
- Provided security for JOR events and the high holidays at the synagogue.

- Participated in Community Health Forum, HC Emergency Management meetings and Suicide Prevent Task Force.

FY2026 Goals

- Recruitment and retaining high-level officers and staff.
- Provide a personnel performance evaluation system in support of Community Oriented Policing and Total Quality Service
- Continue to build and reinforce community trust & relationships: better communication, community events.
- Complete yearly NC Mandated In-Service Training
- Promote community wellness.
- Increase awareness of trends and current crimes using social media
- Utilize the traffic Enforcement Unit to address violations that lead to serious injury crashes.
- Maintain a strong working partnership w/ surrounding agency.
- Assigned officers to various Rescue Squad, Negotiation Task Force and Arson Task Force.

FY2026 Implementation Goals

- **Citizen Survey:** A citizen survey will be conducted every two years. The purpose of this survey is to determine if the agency is meeting the expectations of the community, ascertain what crime trends/problems and quality of life issues the community is concerned with, and what programs or services the community believes the agency should offer.
- **Internal Survey:** This will focus on the most defining element of our organization – the employees. This survey attempts to gain insight from employees about their recommendations/suggestions for improvement to advance and ultimately determines what obstacles we face to achieve our goals. The internal survey will be completed every three years.

Chief Trotter request approval from the Council to purchase the following equipment:

2 - AED's (1 for Town Hall)
 4 - Radios
 2 - Vests
 2 - Rifles
 8 - Handguns
 3 - Flock Cameras
 1 - Vehicle
 Dispatch

Break

Facilitator Mr. Emory called for a 10 min break at 2:00 pm. Resumed at 2:10 pm.

Finalized Goals

Top 4 Goals

Town Hall Needs Assessment
Roads and Infrastructure
Town Operations – In-house -vs- Outsourcing
Better community communications

Better Community Communication
Better understanding of Utility Projects
Successful Centennial Celebration
Shoulder/Ditches/Culverts
Storm Water Ordinance
Town operations – inhouse -vs- outsourcing
Self-evaluation of Council
Ecusta Trail/ Hwy 64
Ecusta Crossing
Maintain active DOT communication (Hwy 64) and good relations.
Town property/SBA Tower

The Council elected to remove the following three from the list due to those already being in motion.

~~Build back better (Hurricane Helen)
Disaster Financial Strategy
Solve FEMA funding/budgeting.~~

Adjournment

Mayor O'Cain moved for an adjournment at 2:50 pm, and he asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

ATTEST:

J. Carey O’Cain, Mayor

Stephanie Banks
Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector

Date

