



Town Council
Annual Budget Retreat Minutes
February 21, 2024 –10:00 a.m.

Mayor O'Cain called the Laurel Park Town Council Annual Budget Retreat meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. on February 21, 2024, at Echo Mountain Inn, 2849 Laurel Park Highway, Laurel Park, NC 28739.

The following attended in person:

- Mayor J. Carey O'Cain
- Mayor Pro Tempore A. Paul Hansen
- Commissioner George W. Banta
- Commissioner Kristin Dunn
- Town Manager Alex Carmichael
- Town Clerk Tamara Amin
- Finance Officer Kirk Medlin
- Public Works Superintendent Brandon Johnson
- Police Chief Bobbie Trotter
- Assistant Police Chief Michael Capps
- Crew Leader Matthew Pearce
- Resident Travis Bonnema
- Resident Donald McIntyre
- Resident Ray Goetsch
- Resident Edward Eaves
- Joe Gibbs- VC3 representative

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen moved to approve the agenda. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Town Manager Alex Carmichael went through what the day will look like for the Budget Retreat.

VC3 PRESENTATION

Town Manager Carmichael introduced Mr. Joe Gibbs from VC3.

Parks Operation Coordinator Bryan Hensley joined the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

Mr. Gibbs went through the VC3 accomplishments for the Town that included:

- Desktop Services & Support
- VOA Environment fully in VC3 Datacenter
- Migrated RMS software from Win 7 Desktop to PD Server
- Backup solution in place for PD Server
- PD devices replaced with VC3 provided equipment
- 24X7 Monitoring and Incident Response Services
- Proactive Services
 - Patch Management
 - Antivirus
 - Anti-Spam

Mr. Gibbs explained the Laurel Park Budget Breakdown.

Fiscal Year Expenses - FY24/25		Recurring
VOA (Current counts for Town and Public Works) (Includes NaaS)		\$36,877.91
SA - Police Support		\$14,671.69
Backups - MSP360		\$2,059.64
Total		\$53,609.24
Project Based Expenses		One-Time
Virtual Server Migration to T440 Host		\$3,000.00
Adobe Creative Cloud		\$1,664.00
O365 MFA		\$500.00
Workstation refresh for Public Works - DESKTOP-TKEUEF2		\$0.00
Total		\$58,773.24

Mr. Gary Anderson joined the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

The future plans for the Town include:

- Migrating virtual servers TLP-DC01 and TOLP-PD-SQL-01 to T440 host server
- T440 server has already been procured and installed
- TLP-DC01 has a Windows Server 2012 OS and needs to be upgraded to Windows Server 2022 Standard license

Mr. Gibbs departed the meeting at 10:21 a.m.

PARKS AND GREENWAYS BUDGET REQUEST

Chair Anderson reviewed the Parks and Greenways Budget for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year.

Parks and Greenway
Budget Request for 2024-25

Committee	Amount Requested
Park Improvements	5,000
Laurel Park Walking Paths	2000
Landscape/Beautification Projects	5000
Bee City USA	1000
Educational Signage	2000
Ecusta Trail Greenway	3000
Arbor Day Plantings and Celebration	600
Volunteer Appreciation Picnic	400
Bicycle Committee	0
Total Request	19,000

Park Improvements would include steps at Jump Off Rock for the Blue Trail, staircase for the Red Trail and Laurel Green Improvements.

Laurel Park Walking Paths would be an ongoing project and would not include new paths. It would just be maintaining what the Town already has.

Landscape/Beautification Projects would be new plantings and maintaining not expanding what the Town has.

Educational Signage would be adding signage at the Canal Park Pollinator Garden, replacing some educational signage at Rhododendron Lake Nature Park.

YMCA representative Katrina McGuire joined the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Ecusta Trail Greenway would be expenses incurred for the transition of the trail into the park, i.e. bicycle racks.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen asked to include signage stating no bikes in the park.

Mayor O’Cain asked Mr. Anderson to keep Highway 64 in mind, i.e. the medians and roundabouts and right of ways in terms of planting some bulbs.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen was concerned about getting water to these roundabouts and medians. Possibly putting an inground hose or inground spigots.

Mr. Gary Anderson emphasized that the Parks and Greenways Board support another Staff person to help Bryan in his role due to the expansion of different parks and their maintenance.

Chair of the Parks and Greenways Board, Gary Anderson left the meeting at 10:32 am.

YMCA SPECIAL REQUEST

Ms. Katrina McGuire introduced herself and gave an overview of what the YMCA does for the County and the different opportunities it provides.

YMCA Representative Mr. Tim Blenco joined the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Mr. Blenco spoke about what the expansion of the YMCA, due to capacity problems, would look like and cost. They are requesting between \$5,000- \$7500 in donations from the Town.

Mr. Blenco invited Staff and Council to their open house on March 11 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

YMCA Representatives Mr. Tim Blenco and Ms. Katrina McGuire departed the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

REVENUE PROJECTIONS

Finance Officer Kirk Medlin went over financial projections for FY24-25. Mr. Medlin said the Town’s primary revenue sources from fiscal year 2019 to 2023 were as follows:

- Ad Valorem (60%)
- Local Option Sales Tax (26%)
- Utility Sales Tax (5%)

The only revenue source controlled by the Town is the Ad Valorem tax. Despite growth and revaluation, the five-year increase in revenues (21.2%) is only slightly ahead of the inflation rate for the same period (18.0%).

New developments currently in the planning/development stages will increase the tax base each year, but the revaluation year always provides the largest growth.

Sales tax is the Town’s second largest revenue source and has shown a consistent growth trend in the past five years (43.8% overall from FY 19 to FY 23). The Town is on pace to receive \$900,000-\$950,000 in FY 24.

Building permits are a minor revenue source (less than 1%) but are increasing year-to-year.

Investment income is by far the most unpredictable revenue source. After years of interest rates near 0%, inflation pushed the yearly income from \$1,670 in FY 21 to \$128,386 in FY 23. This year's numbers are even higher, but every leading indicator – both Federal and State – virtually guarantees a decrease in FY 25 and 26.

While the ABC Distributions – both General and PD – increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, the trend for the past two years shows minimal to no growth.

Miscellaneous income is unpredictable by its very nature. The Town averages about \$20,000 per year.

Utility Sales Tax is growing at an average of 1.5% per year. Despite increases in population, improvements in energy efficiency partially offset the expected increase in usage.

Powell Bill revenues are also trending slower than inflation. Since population is the primary factor in the State's disbursement calculation, the Town's growth is slower than other municipalities.

Beer and Wine Tax is a statewide distribution unrelated to our ABC store. Average growth is 1% per year.

Solid Waste Tax is another minor source of revenue (0.2% of the budget). Growth in this tax is negligible.

The Cable TV Franchise Tax has been in continual decline for the past decade. Ten years ago, it was 1.5% of the Town's yearly revenue; last year, it was 0.6%. Only a State policy change to include new taxes – streaming, etc. – would reverse this trend.

Mr. Medlin said in summary despite the continued steady growth of Ad Valorem and Local Option Sales Tax revenues, the remaining sources are declining compared to inflation. The long-term result of this trend will be an increasing reliance on sales tax growth (which can vary from year to year) and property tax valuations (where growth may flatten out due to limited building space in the Town).

A final note: our revenue estimates for FY 25 will continue to change between now and June. Each additional month of data allows us to adjust the numbers with greater certainty.

GOVERNING BODY BUDGET

Town Manager Carmichael and Finance Officer Medlin went over the Governing Body Budget. Council was unaware of a salary increase in the previous budget for themselves.

Account Number	Description	FY 21 Budget	FY 21 Actual	FY 22 Budget	FY 22 Actual	FY 23 Budget	FY 23 Actual	FY 24 Budget	FY 24 Actual	FY 25 Request
10-4110-1210	STIPEND	12,600	12,600	12,600	12,600	13,860	13,860	12,600	6,930	13,860
10-4110-1700	BOARD MEMBER EXPENSE	9,600	3,419	41,600	26,627	15,000	10,162	-	-	300
10-4110-1705	STATE OF THE TOWN DINNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,000	-	3,000
10-4110-1710	EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DINNER	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,600	1,773	2,250
10-4110-1715	BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPRECIATION	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,500	2,426	4,000
10-4110-1720	COUNCIL RETREAT	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	100	2,000
10-4110-1750	SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS	-	-	3,000	-	5,000	-	-	-	-
10-4110-1810	SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE	1,050	964	1,100	964	1,250	1,080	1,250	530	1,075
10-4110-1900	LEGAL SERVICES	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,000	-	5,000
10-4110-3700	PRINTING & ADVERTISING	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	101	500
10-4110-4550	AUDIT	15,500	15,500	15,500	16,675	18,100	18,821	22,000	14,216	23,800
10-4110-5100	CAPITAL OUTLAY	-	-	-	6,201	15,000	8,579	9,000	-	9,000

Town Manager Carmichael went over the Administration Budget and said this only reflects a 3% COLA and no merit.

Description	FY 21 Budget	FY 21 Actual	FY 22 Budget	FY 22 Actual	FY 23 Budget	FY 23 Actual	FY 24 Budget	FY 24 Actual	FY 25 Request
SALARIES & WAGES	239,500	250,281	248,000	231,387	288,000	281,297	305,035	172,321	313,978
OVERTIME SALARY	1,000	201	-	-	500	-	-	-	-
COMP PAY	1,000	620	-	288	578	578	500	242	500
PART-TIME SALARY	-	-	20,000	38,758	38,800	31,303	29,977	11,556	30,643
SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE	22,800	18,317	20,750	20,618	25,000	24,947	25,365	13,864	26,141
RETIREMENT	38,000	36,149	40,100	37,505	49,000	48,128	54,111	30,428	62,293
GROUP INSURANCE	37,000	33,479	32,500	29,374	34,000	32,438	34,500	19,498	36,761
UNEMPLOYMENT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	458
UNEMPLOYMENT - 1% RESERVE	1,000	523	1,000	-	1,233	1,233	1,000	-	750
WORKMENS COMPENSATION	1,300	598	800	390	700	650	496	556	600
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	2,000	912	1,000	111	(4,852)	5,852	100	78	1,000
LEGAL SERVICES	8,000	8,581	10,000	6,336	22,852	10,223	10,000	4,450	10,000
OFFICE SUPPLIES	2,800	2,803	2,000	1,986	2,000	690	2,000	2,033	2,500
MISCELLANEOUS	5,000	4,239	3,500	3,828	2,794	2,971	3,500	4,263	4,000
EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES	3,600	3,291	3,600	2,551	3,500	1,816	3,500	894	3,000
TRAVEL & TRAINING	9,500	2,209	12,000	11,373	11,154	9,951	19,500	6,522	15,000
UTILITIES	9,800	10,032	10,000	14,746	13,600	12,339	15,000	8,775	15,000
POSTAGE	3,500	2,081	2,000	1,998	2,000	2,067	2,300	721	2,300
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	2,500	354	1,500	615	1,000	723	1,000	465	1,000
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	1,000	174	1,000	120	500	-	500	1,081	1,000
SOFTWARE SUPPORT	32,370	29,989	30,800	30,223	23,500	36,982	32,000	20,765	51,400
ADVERTISING & PRINTING	4,000	3,998	3,000	3,091	2,943	5,473	4,000	2,543	4,000
ELECTIONS	-	-	4,000	3,393	-	-	4,000	-	4,000
CENTENNIAL EXPENSES	-	-	-	2,526	20,000	565	5,000	1,550	25,000
CONTRACTED SERVICES	55,000	44,160	32,000	29,010	32,534	36,714	44,730	30,588	65,000
PROP INS/GEN LIAB	23,000	23,515	30,000	29,807	34,172	34,083	38,204	40,266	40,000
DUES/SUBSCRIPTIONS/FEES	12,000	13,106	12,000	14,889	13,878	14,675	16,000	10,670	16,000
BANK SERVICE CHARGE	10,000	3,332	5,000	2,504	2,000	754	1,000	-	1,000
CREDIT CARD FEES	2,500	1,827	500	545	500	697	500	255	500
TAX COLLECTOR'S FEE - HC	100	1	25	2	25	1	25	-	-
TAX COLLECTOR'S FEE - DMV	4,250	4,653	4,500	4,518	4,500	5,386	4,750	3,089	5,000
PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION FEE - HC	9,500	9,020	9,500	9,149	9,500	9,316	13,000	9,395	11,500
CAPITAL OUTLAY	5,000	4,100	5,000	40,504	9,014	533	-	-	-
LEASE PRINCIPAL	-	-	-	6,679	-	-	-	-	-
LEASE INTEREST	-	-	-	1,071	-	-	-	-	-

Finance Officer Medlin said the current cost of living is at 3.1%

Commissioner Dunn asked staff to add a totals line to the bottom of all these reports.

LUNCH

Commissioner Banta moved to go into recess at 11:38 am. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Banta moved to reconvene the meeting at 12:16 pm. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Bridges joined the meeting at 12:16 pm

POLICE BUDGET AND CAPITAL IMPORVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

Police Chief Trotter said the biggest increase in the budget this year is having to pay for a dispatcher from contracted services.

Description	FY 21 Budget	FY 21 Actual	FY 22 Budget	FY 22 Actual	FY 23 Budget	FY 23 Actual	FY 24 Budget	FY 24 Actual	FY 25 Request
SALARIES & WAGES	372,000	271,464	396,000	360,992	448,000	426,841	471,000	291,726	492,864
OVERTIME SALARY	15,600	13,590	17,000	12,531	17,000	20,058	17,000	12,892	17,000
COMP PAY	9,000	2,662	6,000	4,778	6,000	3,454	5,000	1,539	4,000
PART-TIME SALARY	13,500	21,280	13,500	3,697	28,000	14,177	28,000	15,168	29,416
SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE	29,500	23,255	30,000	28,223	34,000	35,020	35,600	24,360	37,301
RETIREMENT	60,500	41,055	67,000	63,161	78,000	80,425	86,500	57,349	97,713
GROUP INSURANCE	67,000	48,749	68,000	65,183	73,000	68,642	74,000	46,311	78,815
UNEMPLOYMENT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORKMENS COMPENSATION	10,000	8,591	10,000	6,722	8,500	7,603	8,500	9,433	10,000
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	1,000	1,267	1,000	670	1,500	688	1,500	1,317	1,500
UNIFORMS	5,000	4,000	5,000	6,578	5,000	3,533	4,500	1,399	4,500
AUTO SUPPLIES & REPAIRS	21,000	26,172	20,000	28,121	13,500	40,109	25,000	10,597	25,000
MISCELLANEOUS	5,000	4,261	4,000	1,245	8,000	-	4,000	68	2,000
COMMUNITY OUTREACH	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	-	2,000
EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES	8,500	14,314	8,000	28,145	6,287	8,990	9,000	7,202	9,000
TRAVEL & TRAINING	2,000	363	2,000	873	2,000	1,109	4,000	2,426	4,000
UTILITIES	7,000	6,528	6,500	9,028	11,013	12,350	6,500	1,503	6,500
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	500	904	500	2,027	5,180	180	2,500	8,496	2,500
SOFTWARE SUPPORT	17,200	16,885	25,000	21,479	13,000	16,364	14,500	13,898	20,000
CONTRACTED SERVICES	6,700	5,442	6,500	4,259	6,500	6,083	6,500	2,739	36,500
DUES/SUBSCRIPTIONS/FEES	500	1,091	-	-	500	84	700	-	700
CAPITAL OUTLAY	15,000	93,306	25,000	10,592	11,200	4,531	18,100	6,540	19,500
INSTALLMENT/LEASE	17,000	8,230	45,000	17,185	36,020	20,227	88,983	5,084	88,983
CONTRACTED SERVICES	424,000	424,000	435,000	430,000	444,847	444,847	574,945	287,473	575,000

Chief Trotter said the department is not asking for any cars. They would like to take a break and figure out what the Town wants to do about Enterprise.

Mayor O’Cain asked Chief Trotter and Staff to get a list of all the vehicles life cycles, maintenance, and leases. He said the Town should not keep them for more than five years.

Commissioner Banta asked Chief Trotter to get a price for a car counter up at Jump Off Rock to replace the broken one.

Commissioner Dunn asked Staff to get turnover rate for departments.

The council asked Police to get pricing on a new UTV since it was not included in this draft budget cycle.

Chief Trotter said the goals for the police department are as follows:

1. Reduce Speed Complaints
 - a. Use the Speed Sign
 - b. 1 certified with RADAR
 - c. Conduct Saturated Patrols

2. Continue to Train the Officers
 - a. Leadership Courses
 - b. Medical Training
 - c. Active Shooter Training

3. Maintain Levels of Presence
 - a. Continue Foot Patrol
 - i. Parks and Business areas
 - b. Better Communication with Public
 - c. Community Classes/Outreach

4. Community Events
 - a. Coffee with Police/ Shop with a Hero
 - b. Trunk or Treat/ National Night Out
 - c. Events with FOLP, VHFD, etc.
 - d. Non-Profits Meet and Greet

The Departments concerns:

1. Equipment:
 - a. Vehicles (for now)
 - b. Firearms:
 - i. Rifles- almost fully equipped
 - ii. Handguns: Aging
 - c. Radios: Keeping up
 - d. Vests: Keeping up
 - e. Ammunition: 6 cases on backorder
 - f. Training
 - i. 2,000 allocated = 1 Away Class
 - ii. Ex) BRCC Training = \$600 per person

2. Manpower/ Retention:
 - a. Last year lost 2 to Reserve
 - i. One Position down- One in the Hopper
 - ii. Additional Properties = Additional Patrol

3. To Build on Hiring/Retention:
 - a. Qualified Applicants
 - b. Salary
 - c. 2 Supervisors

4. Dispatch/Animal Control

Chief Trotter said this year there will be no changes to the operational budget and no vehicles. The department just needs equipment, and the Town is really struggling with retention and finding qualified candidates. Salary is a big factor why the Town is losing employees. For example, the Police Department whose employees remain as reserves but go elsewhere shows

that they love this Town but need to do what’s best for their families moneywise.

Equipment

AEDs (2)	\$3,600
Radios (4)	\$6,000
Vests (3)	\$3,300
Rifles (2)	\$3,400
Handguns (2)	\$3,200
Dispatch	TBA

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT BUDGET AND CIP

Public Works Superintendent Brandon Johnson went over the budget requests for the department.

Description	FY 21 Budget	FY 21 Actual	FY 22 Budget	FY 22 Actual	FY 23 Budget	FY 23 Actual	FY 24 Budget	FY 24 Actual	FY 25 Request
SALARIES & WAGES	275,500	231,588	305,000	300,079	348,000	334,613	380,000	228,510	409,264
OVERTIME SALARY	5,000	4,887	4,000	1,211	2,000	-	2,000	139	1,500
COMP PAY	10,000	8,615	4,000	5,407	4,000	2,236	4,000	2,171	4,000
PART-TIME SALARY	2,500	38	-	85	-	3,904	15,000	(3,327)	-
SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE	22,700	18,391	24,000	22,322	27,000	25,237	28,600	17,320	30,969
RETIREMENT	42,500	36,351	50,000	47,973	59,000	56,981	67,000	40,661	75,581
GROUP INSURANCE	69,000	55,765	65,000	62,980	65,000	60,868	65,500	41,633	74,220
UNEMPLOYMENT	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORKMENS COMPENSATION	13,000	10,041	12,000	12,465	10,800	10,991	12,500	12,771	13,000
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	10,000	35	10,000	1,999	9,000	408	10,000	-	10,000
UNIFORMS	5,000	1,052	4,000	4,037	4,000	3,112	4,000	3,787	4,000
ROAD REPAIR MATERIALS	6,000	3,841	5,000	5,094	7,500	5,218	7,500	3,703	7,500
SNOW REMOVAL	12,000	3,494	10,000	3,509	8,000	856	7,500	-	10,000
AUTO SUPPLIES & REPAIRS	20,000	18,637	20,000	23,285	(4,500)	40,267	20,000	13,951	15,000
MISCELLANEOUS	1,000	170	1,000	893	(500)	2,498	1,000	-	1,000
EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES	22,000	14,805	15,000	16,915	20,000	20,557	20,000	9,364	20,000
TRAVEL & TRAINING	3,500	81	4,000	1,250	4,000	2,288	4,000	40	4,000
UTILITIES	14,500	16,938	16,000	16,362	16,000	16,948	17,000	7,457	17,000
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	2,000	405	2,000	675	2,000	1,867	4,000	1,326	4,000
EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	16,000	14,663	15,000	6,748	15,000	10,686	15,000	3,784	15,000
SOFTWARE SUPPORT	5,000	5,181	5,500	4,992	4,750	4,950	4,750	2,716	4,750
CONTRACTED SERVICES	22,000	15,352	15,000	14,744	24,100	24,918	15,000	9,524	15,000
FEES & PERMITS	1,500	300	1,500	1,661	3,500	2,584	2,500	1,705	2,500
CAPITAL OUTLAY	68,000	149,947	35,000	33,607	81,400	36,623	97,875	96,021	170,000
INSTALLMENT/LEASE	19,000	8,844	25,000	19,315	60,000	26,223	110,566	12,284	110,000
CONTRACTED SERVICES	184,080	176,955	190,000	168,263	195,000	181,343	206,700	109,886	225,000

EQUIPMENT	ITEM	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	FY 27-28	FY 28-29	Funding Source
	Catipillar 420 Backhoe	\$ 170,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	Trade-in, GF
	Outdoor Camera System for PW Site	\$ -	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	GF
	OBD Leaf Vacuum 20 yd,	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,000	GF
	Equipment Total	\$ 170,000	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,000	
	Work Truck w/ Snow Plow & Dump Bed	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	Trade-in, GF
	Work Truck w/ Snow Plow & Dump Bed	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 53,000	\$ -	Trade-in, GF
	Vehicle Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ 53,000	\$ -	
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS		\$ 170,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 53,000	\$ 80,000	

Crew Leader Pearce led the conversation about purchasing a Caterpillar 420 Backhoe. The Town’s current Caterpillar 420 is increasing year-to-year maintenance cost and down time due to machine age. The current CAT420 was purchased in 2016 and has been used for 3,000 hours. The department likes to try and sell or trade-in equipment around the 10-year mark.

Mr. Pearce explained what the backhoe is used for:

- Pushing up debris yard
- Seasonal brush collection
- Mulch deliveries
- Loading/Unloading of materials
- Asphalt
- Gravel road repairs
- Tree removal
- Stormwater
 - Culvert excavation
 - Heavy material lifting

The backhoe would cost with outfitting \$158K. The trade in is \$45-\$50K, costing \$114K.

The Department spoke about accomplishments and goals.

The Department accomplished:

- 9- Culvert replacements with ditch repairs
- Road shoulder repairs
- Additional asphalt patching
- Maintained continuing education hours

The Departments goals:

- Larger focus on road shoulder repairs
- Storm water ditch repairs
- Recertifications for flagger training and chainsaw safety

Commissioner Hansen said the 64 landscaping will be heavily mulched and asked if the Department can double grind the mulch.

Mr. Johnson explained that compost is better than mulch.

Mayor O’Cain asked to blend the mulch with good compost to save the Town money.

Mayor O’Cain said he has received complaints about the shoulder repairs and responding with “we don’t have time” is unacceptable. He said the correct response should be, “we have a schedule, and you will see a difference in two or three months.”

Commissioners asked Staff to investigate subcontractors and see the cost to stay ahead of shoulders and culverts.

Commissioner Banta said the Town should get DOT to do initial plantings and landscaping. Commissioner Banta asked Staff to get numbers for how much money is left on roads and how much the Town has spent. He then asked Staff to put the remainder in the new budget plus an additional \$600K for paving only. He then said to do the same for culverts/shoulders plus

whatever Staff thinks needs to be put in. Ditches and stabilizing roads should also be a separate item.

PARKS DEPARTMENT CIP

Parks Operation Coordinator Bryan Hensley went over the capital outlay for 2024-2025 for Parks. Mr. Hensley spoke about:

- Ansong Backhoe Attachment for Parks Tractor- \$8,500
- Grappler Attachment for Parks Tractor- \$3,000
- Rhododendron Lake Park Bridge Rebuild Joist and Decking Materials- \$7,000
Labor- \$15,000

Mr. Hensley explained what the Ansong Backhoe Attachment does:

- Will help with drainage issues with minimal damage to turf and paths
- Digging large holes for tree planting and lifting plants into holes
- Moving large logs for pollinator gardens and path edging
- Moving dirt or mulch with front bucket and spreading with back bucket
- Easily accessible to different job sites

Mr. Hensley explained what the Parks Kubota Tractor Grappler Attachment does:

- Great for moving and loading brush
- Moving logs and raising logs to be cut by chainsaw
- Digging up and cutting roots of tree stumps
- Moving large flat stones

Mr. Hensley said the materials needed for the Rhododendron Lake Park Bridge are for the main rot of joists that are causing bowing of the decking boards and screws to be forced up. It will need new decking, joists, curb rails, and galvanized steel angle brackets.

Mr. Hensley spoke about the accomplishments this year:

- Working with Parks and Greenway to add more beauty and pollinators to our greenspaces
- Working with volunteers on the best way to utilize their time
- Worked with the Landscape Architect, Engineer, and Contractors with the stream restoration
- Planting new plants, edging, mulching, trimming bushes, pruning trees, sod, and watering new plants at Laurel Green Park
- Working on Little Laurel Green Playground
- Keeping up with trash and landscaping maintenance at all parks in Laurel Park

Commissioner Hansen asked about the status of the pathways in Laurel Green Park.

Mayor asked to put a line item in the budget for Laurel Green Park and Rhododendron Lake

Nature Park.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Town Manager Carmichael said the goal for this year is to close out 2 Laurel Green funds, put an additional \$30K towards the Highway 64 project and put six cents for Roads and Powell Bill.

RECESS

Commissioner Dunn moved to go into recess at 1:49 pm. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion: there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Assistant Police Chief Capps departed the meeting at 1:49 pm.

Commissioner Banta moved to reconvene the meeting at 2:18 pm. Mayor O'Cain asked for discussion: there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

GOAL SETTING

Town Manager Carmichael asked Council what their goals were for this year besides roads budget of an additional \$600K and \$25K for Centennial.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen said there are planning a Gala March 1, 2025 for the Centennial, and a 4th of July picnic on July 5th that would be free of charge.

Commissioner Dunn said the Gala would cost \$30K and the Committee would be selling tickets for that. The picnic would cost about \$16K.

Mayor Pro Tem Hansen said there would be plaques for houses that are 100 years old. There would be an AD insert in the Hendersonville Times. The Committee talked about a banner for each month.

Commissioner Dunn said there would also be a bear on 5th Avenue as well as the ART on Main banner. Commissioner Dunn also said the Committee is looking at stemless glasses and bumper stickers.

Mayor O'Cain asked staff to increase the Centennial budget to \$50K.

Commissioner Bridges wanted to speak about staffing. Commissioner Bridges thinks the Town needs to increase staffing because it has been complaint driven and thinks Mr. Hensley needs to 2 additional staff not 1.

Mayor O'Cain thinks the Town should ease up to 2 new staff and just do 1 this year.

Commissioner Dunn asked about doing a time study.

Mr. Harry Rising Tax Administrator of Henderson County joined the meeting at 2:34 p.m.

Mayor O’Cain asked Staff to look at subcontractors instead of hiring an additional staff member so there are no recurring costs.

HENDERSON COUNTY TAX PRESENTATION

Mr. Rising painted a picture for Council for taxes for the year. Laurel Park tax receipts for FY23-24 as of February 19, 2024 is as follows:

	Charge:	Amount Collected	Unpaid Balance	Percentage
Town of Laurel Park	\$2,571,273.46	\$2,550,391.50	\$20,881.96	99.188%
Henderson County	\$99,135,502.36	\$96,885,285.64	\$2,250,216.72	97.730%
VTS Collections	\$4,580,565,85	\$4,565,981.13	\$14,584.72	99.68%
Delinquent Collections	\$1,041,250.00	\$630,205.16	\$411,044.84	60.52%

As of February 12th, 2024:

- Real Property
 - Laurel Park has 1,824 Real Property Bills, valued at \$647,888,500
- Business Personal Property
 - Laurel Park has 108 BPP Bills, valued at \$6,193,851
- Individual Personal Property
 - Laurel Park has 56 IPP Bills, valued at \$481,805
- Public Service Property
 - Laurel Park has 9 PSP Bills, valued at \$5,749,081
- Motor Vehicle (Billed by DMV)
 - Laurel Park has 2,205 RMV Bills, valued at \$33,035,624

Mr. Rising gave Council considerations for projecting value. All personal property except RMV’s are valued as of January 1. For real property that means most property will be valued as of the last mass reevaluation, which was 1 January 2023. Limited changes such as new structures, major additions, and demolitions that are in effect as of 1st of January of a non-revaluation year are included as modifications to the last mass revaluation. RMV’s are taxed along with their staggered registration period. Another consideration would be discoveries, property not listed but discovered after the listing period, as well as informal and formal appeals.

Mr. Chris Burns representative from Summit Marketing Group joined the meeting at 2:53 pm

The FY24-25 Property Tax Projection for Laurel Park

As of February 12, 2024

	Current Tax Rate	Total Taxable Value (Calculated)	Estimated value at risk (Percentage)	Less Value at Risk	Total Projected Value as of 2/12/2024
TOWN OF LAUREL PARK	0.395				
Real Property	REI	\$ 647,888,550	0.0100	\$ 6,478,886	\$ 641,409,665
Business Personal Property	BUS	\$ 6,193,851	0.0002	\$ 1,239	\$ 6,192,612
Individual Personal Property	IND	\$ 481,805	0.0001	\$ 48	\$ 481,757
Public Service Property	PUB	\$ 5,749,081	0.0002	\$ 1,150	\$ 5,747,931
Motor Vehicles (Billed by NC DMV)	RMV	\$ 33,035,624	0.0700	\$ 2,312,494	\$ 30,723,130
		\$ 693,348,911		\$ 8,793,816	\$ 684,555,095

In closing Mr. Rising reminded Staff that the Interlocal Agreement expires in June 2024.

Mr. Rising left the meeting at 3:14 pm

WEBSITE PRESENTATION

Mr. Burns gave the Council an overview of what the new website would look like. He said he thinks it should be ready in 4-6 weeks.

Mr. Burns left the meeting at 3:30 pm

FINALIZE GOALS

Council asked Staff to find a solution for personnel concerns whether that is merit or COLA or combination. Mayor O’Cain asked Staff to see what they think it takes to keep people satisfied.

Town Manager Carmichael said dependent benefits has been brought up and how our two most tenured employees stuck around because they were grandfathered in and the Town pays 100% of their dependent coverage. Mr. Hensley explained that this in fact was a big reason why he did not seek employment elsewhere.

Mayor O’Cain asked Staff to see who would be interested and the cost to the Town.

Council then discussed raising the living wage across the board. The Town hires at \$18 per hour.

Council goals included:

- Highway 64
- \$600 K for Roads and Stormwater being a separate fund not included in the \$600K
- Centennial
- Subcontracting the edge of the roads
- Livable wage and retention strategies

Council asked about a presentation for Mr. Will Buie. Town Manager Carmichael said he will present in the Spring and do a road survey.

Commissioner Banta said the Town needs to bid out as soon as possible for roads. The Town needs to do a Fall Road Study and Spring construction.

Mayor O’Cain asked Staff to use the old study and get a bid and move ahead by also throwing in new money.

Council also talked about the grants to do the playground project.

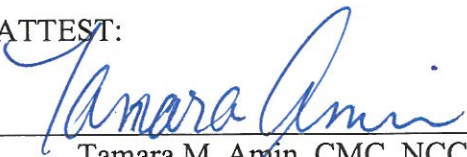
CLOSING REMARKS

Mayor O’Cain thanked the staff for all their time and support.

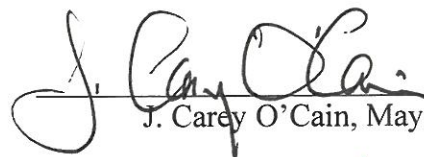
ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Dunn moved to adjourn at 3:55 p.m. Mayor O’Cain asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

ATTEST:



Tamara M. Amin, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector



J. Carey O’Cain, Mayor

3/19/24

Date