

**Town of Angier  
Board of Commissioners  
Annual Retreat  
Thursday, March 17, 2023, 8:00 A.M.  
Angier Municipal Building  
28 N. Raleigh Street  
Minutes**

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**Board of Commissioners**

Mayor Bob Smith  
Mayor Pro-tem Loru Boyer Hawley  
Commissioner Jim Kazakavage  
Commissioner George “Jr.” Price via *Zoom*  
Commissioner Alan Coats

**Staff**

Richard Hicks, Town Manager  
Veronica Hardaway, Town Clerk  
Melissa Wilder, HR Director

**Call to Order:** Mayor Smith presided, calling the Annual Board of Commissioners Retreat meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Mayor Smith led the pledge of allegiance.

**Invocation:** Mayor Smith offered the invocation.

**General Discussion**

Interim Town Manager Richard Hicks stated that according to Angier’s current population and projected homes to be built, the population is estimated to be approximately 12,000-13,000 by 2028.

The Board was challenged with the question of “if you were going to move right now and were looking at a new place, what would you be looking for?”

- Lower price point on new homes
- Community Center
- Accessibility to walking downtown; connection of sidewalks
- More downtown businesses, restaurants, and boutiques
- Chain stores that offer electronics
- Farmer’s Market
- Businesses that stay open after 5 o’clock
- Increased job opportunities
- Public transportation (connection to other systems)

**Town Building Inspections**

Mr. Hicks stated the Town currently has a contract with Harnett County that is set to expire in early 2024. This contract costs \$88,000 per year; however, it is expected to increase significantly because our level of service requirements has grown. Based on the Town receiving approximately \$200,000 in revenue annually for permits, there would be no financial benefit if the contract increases substantially. There was discussion regarding the possibility of hiring an inspector in-house to meet the needs of Angier. It was explained that

there are 5 fields of inspections that include: plumbing, electrical, HVAC, building, and fire and have three levels in each area. The third level deals more with industrial and large commercial property that the Town would be able to outsource; however, it was determined the Town would need at least a Level II inspector that is certified in all 5 areas. Mr. Hicks voiced that if the Town depends on a single inspector to keep in mind time off and many hours of continuing education. The Town would need several inspectors to continue the level of service that is being provided now. Salary for a certified inspector is estimated to be approximately \$70,000. It was also discussed how costly it would be to send someone to get their certifications by the time all expenses are paid such as time away from work, cost of classes, gas, lodging, etc. Currently, the Town's Code Enforcement Officer is attending school to get his certifications; however, that will take some time. Mr. Hicks explained that another option would be to turn building permits and inspections over to Harnett County and they collect the fees. He also added that the law does not allow inspections to be split between the Town and County; it's either all or nothing.

The Board had discussion regarding increasing the fees for inspections and permitting. It was the consensus of the Board to continue allowing Harnett County to conduct inspections until the contract is due to expire and revisit at a later date. Mr. Hicks stated discussions with the County will begin to see what their interests are and if they are willing to extend the contract.

### **Town Hall/Police Department**

Mr. Hicks stated the Town has already spent \$1M in funds on a building that will not be built. There is still a need for space as the Town continues to grow and hire more staff. Currently, the Planning Department is renting office space across the street from Town Hall due to lack of room. It was the consensus of the Board not to continue with leasing this office space. There was discussion as to whether a new Town Hall and/or Police Department was still being considered, to which the Board agreed it was very much needed.

There was discussion of the possibility of utilizing the old annex space to build a new Police Department compared to building a new building to include a Board Room and leave the Police Department where they are currently. However, it's done, the Board voiced they want connectivity between the two buildings. The Police Department would be more apt to receive state funding by being in their own building. The Board did not want to take this topic completely off the table and now would like to move forward in phases since prices of material is decreasing. The annex building was originally being reviewed to be utilized and upfitted as the new Police Department; however, this was not followed through. The Board expressed their desire to hire an architect that is more local to Angier and agreed to allow the Interim Town Manager to set up interviews with firms.

In order to help free up office space, it was suggested moving the Community Development Coordinator to either the Public Works building or the Parks & Rec building. It was also suggested to move this position to be supervised under a different department other than Planning; possibly the Town Manager.

The Board discussed land available located off McIver Street approximately .78 acres and deferred this to the Interim Town Manager to investigate as a possibility. It was also discussed of the possibility of sending investigators to the new proposed training facility located at the range temporarily. Mr. Hicks made a recommendation to also look at the possibility of a Community Center along with the Town Hall and/or Police Station project as there seems to be a lot of interest to which the Board agreed to proceed.

### **Future Use of ABC Library Funds**

Mr. Hicks stated the law requires that ABC Funds go to Angier Public Library; however, it doesn't exist anymore and is now operated by Harnett County. The County has suggested that Angier consider changing the law allowing it to be utilized somewhere else. One option would be to decide the future needs of the library building not necessarily giving it to the County for their day-to-day operation. The second option is changing the law to utilize the funds in another department. The Mayor stated that the Town can go to the Superior Court and do what's called a "*Cy Pres*" which means the possibility that was expressed for donations is no longer possible then the court can order funding be disbursed elsewhere.

In the event that Angier assumes the public library after two years and improvements to the building, it was suggested leaving the funds where they are. Currently, the ABC Board is holding onto the funds due to not knowing where to send it. It was the consensus of the Board to leave the library funds as is and defer to the Town Attorney if funds can still be given to the Town to be utilize for building maintenance.

### **Wilma Street Improvements**

There have been complaints regarding the traffic on Wilma Street and how narrow the road is. The sidewalk project for this area has been approved and will take at least 2-3 years to start and complete construction. The thought at the time was to widen the road at the same time as construction of the sidewalk; however, it was the consensus of the Board to widen the street now and do curb and gutter at a later time. The width of the street is a higher priority and the use of Powell Bill Funds would be appropriate for this project.

### **Farmer's Market**

It was suggested to consider adding this item to the architect firm that will be hired for the Town Hall/Police Station project. The discussion was to be able to utilize this space as a multipurpose area with bathrooms.

### **Community Center/Park Expansion**

The Board agreed that the Community Center was more of a priority at this time. The Jack Marley Park Master Plan that was conducted showed that a Community Center can be constructed without taking up much of the ball fields. If funding is not received by Congressman Nickel's office from the applications that were sent, the USDA will have money and grant opportunities. The consensus was for the Interim Town Manager move forward with this project approved by the Board last year.

### **Urban Service Area**

This item has been previously approved by the Board at last year's Retreat. There have been discussions with Harnett County over the last year regarding Urban Service Area (USA). An Urban Service Area is an agreement between a municipality and county to designate areas outside of their planning jurisdiction where they plan to grow one day but do not have it in their current jurisdiction. This agreement would allow developers to annex into Angier but be served by county utilities. Angier would be able to gain additional tax base without putting more strain on the Town's sewer capacity or water pressure. There was concern about yielding to the County from past history; however, the Board agreed they are willing to do what's best for Angier and Harnett County by having an agreement in place.

### **Economic Development**

The Community Development Coordinator has started moving forward to refocus her efforts on including economic development into her main duties. There was discussion as to why this position was being supervised under the Planning & Inspections Department and couldn't be an independent entity or supervised by the Town Manager. Concerns were brought up; however, it was the consensus to continue the discussion of those concerns in closed session following the meeting.

### **Stormwater Utility Fee**

At the previous meeting, it was discussed that once the Town of Angier reached 10,000 in population, there's a lot more involved dealing with the EPA and the State Division of Water Quality, additional regulations to follow, the adoption of ordinances, and the enforcement of those ordinances. This all comes at a cost, a stormwater utility fee. One of the things you can pay out of that fee is administrative costs. It also allows the Town to raise funds for stormwater projects. There was some interest previously in possibly adopting a stormwater fee. These fees can be applied as a flat rate per structure or based on square footage of the lot.

The Town will have to be permitted by the State once the population size reaches 10,000 to ensure that stormwater retention ponds are maintained. It was the consensus of the Board for the Interim Town Manager to make a proposal in the budget for a stormwater utility fee.

### **Utility Rates/Harnett Water/Sewer Increase**

The Town has received notification from Harnett County that water and sewer rates will be increased by about 18-20%. There was discussion on whether the Town should pass those increases through our utility rates or absorb a portion of the cost. It was recommended the Town set aside additional revenues to help cover water and sewer expenses as well as matching grant funds. The consensus was to pass the increase through the Town's utility rates that will be brought before the Board in May.

### **Aesthetic Improvements (Banners, Entranceways)**

There was discussion regarding the poor condition of Town entranceway signs. The entrance to the Town should be more vibrant and inviting not neglected. The signs don't need to be replaced but refurbished. Previously, the Town had purple banners with the clock towers on them that looked welcoming; since then, there have been two attempts for banners that missed the mark. Current banners are not very attractive or welcoming.

There was also discussion on seeing banners and flower planters down at Jack Marley Park for color. The entrance sign to the park also needs to be updated and painted and could use flowers that used to be planted in front. The Board wants to see more businesses plant crepe myrtles.

Some other items discussed that need attention are the Town Hall entrance sign, repainting parking spaces, weeds along the main roads, dirt and debris on streets. There's an organization willing to fund the cost of an electronic sign and it was discussed to research how that could be installed at the intersection of NC-210 & Hwy 55. It was mentioned the Town used to host "Operation In As Much" where townspeople, churches, and businesses would team up and clean up downtown. They would power wash sidewalks, pick up trash, and clean windows.

It was pointed out that the state will pay jurisdictions to keep the main thoroughfares cleaned using street sweepers.

### **FY 23/24 Budget Concerns**

Due to inflation, some of the biggest concerns for the budget is the cost of fuel and materials and supplies; however, revenues will definitely exceed expenditures. Most of the revenue expected for new homes won't be seen until next year. Based on new construction, the Town will have approximately \$500,000 in revenue for FY 23/24. Sales tax was budgeted at 3% for last years budget; however, that tax rate is coming in at 18%.

There was discussion regarding electric charging stations for vehicles and see if the Town can apply for grants to cover funding. More businesses and gas stations are installing them.

In order to accommodate requests made by departments, it was the consensus of the Board not to give cost of living increases to staff since a 12% across the board pay increase was given to everyone this year. However, due to employment being less than a year, there were a few employees that did not receive that increase and should be budgeted for. It was pointed out that other municipalities are moving forward with salary increases leaving Angier to potentially fall behind again. There was discussion that the reasoning for the 12% increases was to get salaries where they should have been a long time ago and prevent staff from leaving. It was suggested to set aside extra funds and come the first of the year reassess. The Board was not in favor of receiving increases themselves.

### **Downtown Revitalization**

It was discussed to bring back the façade grants, business incentives, tax incentives, getting locations for businesses, and supporting rejuvenations of locations. The Board agreed the Community Development Coordinator needs to market these offerings made by the Town and touch base with businesses.

It was brought up that staff has not approached the Board with cost savings ideas and recommended that the Town Manager and Department Heads see if there's any way we could use our resources better. Mr. Hicks responded that he reviews everything during the budget process to make sure funds aren't being spent frivolously.

There was discussion regarding the lack of functions and events downtown and the shortage of money from vendors because of this. The Board agreed that there's been too much complacency and lack of initiative within the Town.

### **Other**

There was concern that real attention needs to be given to the Depot. It has been brought up on several occasions that not all of the sliding doors open and half of the electricity isn't working. The Angier Chamber may be willing to help out with maintenance issues.

There was discussion on bike rentals and how there may be a sponsor that would be willing to purchase them. It may be something popular down at the park or in the downtown area. This could be something worth looking into by the Community Development Coordinator; however, it was pointed out that some towns are getting rid of the motorized scooters as they're becoming a problem. There was also discussion about paddle or row boat rentals available at the park.

The Board had discussion regarding a Veterans Memorial Park located at the entrance of Jack Marley Park near the cemetery. The area has been staked out already and it's at a point where funding is being sought out. Estimates should be received soon for total cost; however, this wouldn't be funded by the Town. The design of the memorial will be for military and first responders. There was concern regarding setbacks and if there would be enough clearing for the right of way to which it was explained that the memorial will be low profile and will give plenty of room to prevent obstruction of view.

**Board Action:** The Town Board unanimously voted to break for lunch at approximately 11:58pm.

**Motion:** Mayor Pro-tem Hawley

**Vote:** 4-0; unanimous

**Board Action:** The Town Board unanimously voted to reconvene from lunch at approximately 1:00pm.

**Motion:** Mayor Pro-tem Hawley

**Vote:** 4-0; unanimous

**Board Action:** The Town Board unanimously voted to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS-143-318.11 (a)(6) to discuss a personnel matter at approximately 1:00pm.

**Motion:** Mayor Pro-tem Hawley

**Vote:** 4-0; unanimous

**Board Action:** The Town Board unanimously voted to reconvene in open session at approximately 2:00pm.


**Motion:** Commissioner Price

**Vote:** 4-0; unanimous

**Adjournment:** Being no further business, the Town Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 2:00pm.

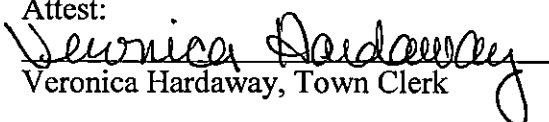
**Motion:** Mayor Pro-tem Hawley

**Vote:** 4-0; unanimous



Robert K. Smith, Mayor

Attest:



Veronica Hardaway, Town Clerk

