

Board of Commissioners

By Valerie Payne

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on May 11. Commissioners present were Alicia Durham, Clark Edwards, Robert Cox and Ted Goetzinger.

Mayor Broadman called for the agenda to be approved. No disclosures or conflicts of interest were added. He announced the Kayak for the Warriors (K4TW) paddleboard/kayak race will be held on June 4.

Town Clerk Rocci read one comment, and several people spoke during the public comment session. Julie Anderson introduced Lois O'Leary as a new member of the finance and administration staff.

The consent agenda including past minutes, tax discoveries and releases, and Strategic Planning Committee appointments of Suzanne Wheatcraft, George Green and John Ferguson was approved.

New Business:

Town Clerk Charlie Rocci introduced a grant for preservation of the natural environment with a focus on osprey protection, which was approved.

Town Planner Kevin Reed presented information on the North Carolina Resilient Coastal Communities (NCRCC) grant, which involved an amendment to the budget, and was approved.

Finance Director Julie Anderson discussed the budget amendments and noted that inflation issues are a major concern. Adjustments were made and approved for the gas budget. The encouraging word was that lots of building permits are being issued, generating income for the budget.

Unfinished Business:

Town Manager Brian Kramer continued the discussion on FY2022-23 General Budget fund options. There were four proposals, all of which included various levels of tax increases. With inflation impacting everyone, this was of great concern, and the public is encouraged to express concerns and opinions. The budget vote will be in June, with more discussions in upcoming meetings. Option #3, which includes a tax increase of 4.3 cents was recommended by Mr. Kramer. This option includes \$100K in American Relief Plan (ARP) funds, \$100K from the fire truck reserve, and a water fund base and usage rate increase. The annual impact for a property valued at \$400K and using less than 5,000 gallons of water a month would be \$258.

Other options were discussed. It was noted that the difference between Option #2 increase and Option #3 was that Option #2 had a \$40/year difference in tax on a property valued at \$400K, with no money being removed from the fire truck reserve. There are no salary increases and no appropriations for sidewalks in this budget.



The table below provides the timeline for our planning for next year's budget. All budget meetings are open public meetings. Call Town Clerk Charlie Rocci at 247-4353, ext. 13, to check for changes before a meeting.

Pine Knoll Shores Budget Timeline (FY2022-23)

DATE	TOPIC
June 8, 6 p.m.	First monthly regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners meeting and Budget hearing (Vote no later than June 30, 2022)

Welcome to Valerie Payne

Valerie Payne, who has lived in Pine Knoll Shores for five years, is our newest addition to *The Shoreline* staff. Originally from the Pittsburgh area, she majored in elementary education and received her master's degree in behavioral disorders from West Virginia University. She taught children of all ages for 38 years before retiring. Valerie has always enjoyed writing and has volunteered to cover the Board of Commissioners meetings to incorporate that hobby with community service. She currently lives with her two children, who fell in love with the area and decided to join their mom and make this community their home. She enjoys gardening and entertaining and, of course, the sunshine of the Crystal Coast. She is looking forward to this new challenge of covering the Board of Commissioners meetings, and we thank her for volunteering.—The Editors

Town Manager Kramer reported on these additional items:

- The NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) and NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) grants were submitted.
- The Salter Path Road water project preliminary design plans are 50% complete.
- A dune management consultation was scheduled to be held the week after the meeting. Ken Richardson was working to establish an annual record of height, width and vegetation of the dunes to use in growth comparisons.
- Actions are being implemented from the Strategic Plan, such as establishing attributes for the ideal Public Safety Department, including education, experience and outreach to second-home owners.

Finance Director Julie Anderson reported that ad valorem collections were down from 99.6% to 99.3% and that beach tax collections were down from 99.7% to 99.2% from FY21 to FY22. She also stated that the annual audit interim field-work was to begin on May 31.

Fire Chief Jason Baker reported that, with regard to EMS billing collections for January 1-December 31, 2021, 58% of EMS billing was collected after adjustments and 48% of all bills were adjusted. He also gave a safety reminder for residents to know their location on the beach so that they can give that to dispatch if an emergency arises and for residents to be aware of surroundings when doing yard work because copperheads are in our area.

Police Chief Ryan Thompson reported that the Burgers, Boots & Badges cook-out was a big success, and a similar event is planned for the fall. He reported that two new officers were welcomed to the force: Sgt. Kenny Castro, a bilingual former Marine who has 13 years of law enforcement experience and numerous certifications, including crisis intervention and leadership trainings, and Officer Dillon Haymore, certified Firefighter II and EMT-B, who has worked part time for the Pine Knoll Shores Fire Department for the past four years and also graduated first in his class in Basic Law Enforcement Training.

Public Services Department Director Sonny Cunningham reported that beach grass was to be fertilized the week after the meeting. He noted that the cost of fertilizer has gone from \$17/bag to \$33/bag. He also said that the town has begun spraying for mosquitoes and is using a larvicide. Beach Access K stairs and a water leak at Holly Road were repaired, and the septic field at Veterans Park has been rehabilitated.

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