



**TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.**

The Board of Commissioners of the Town of Holden Beach, North Carolina met for a Special Meeting on Thursday, May 28, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Public Assembly. Present were Mayor J. Alan Holden; Mayor Pro Tem Gerald Brown; Commissioners Woody Tyner, Brian Murdock, Mike Sullivan and Pat Kwiatkowski; Town Manager David W. Hewett; Town Clerk Heather Finnell; Assistant Town Manager Christy Ferguson; Public Services Director Chris Clemmons; Police Chief Jeremy Dixon; Inspections Director Tim Evans; and Fiscal Operations Supervisor Margaret Lancaster. The meeting was streamed on the Town's Facebook page and opportunity for comments was provided prior to the meeting due to the restrictions in place for COVID-19.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments were submitted.

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON GENERATOR FOR TOWN HALL**

Town Manager Hewett explained he amended the matrix from the last meeting with the information the Board requested. He reviewed the new information. Mayor Pro Tem Brown asked the minimum wind load it would need to have. Inspections Director Evans explained how the wind load worked and said he would be able to permit it. Mayor Pro Tem Brown asked about the difference in the warranties. Town Manager Hewett replied the Caterpillar comes with a four-year standard warranty. The John Deere is two years/ 2,000 hours. The additional per year price is another \$1,000 a year for the John Deere. To get the same amount of warranty, you would basically increase the price \$2,000. Mayor Pro Tem Brown would like to know the cost of a 10-year warranty for Gregory Poole. Town Manager Hewett said they have about three pages of information that is like a menu and you decide what you would like to do. Mayor Pro Tem Brown would like to know the cost per year for the warranty. There are two different fuel capacities. Town Manager Hewett said you have to understand the informal bid process. If we are going to go to that type of detail, we need to have an engineer draw up specifications so it can be competed. He provided information on informal bid solicitations.

Commissioner Murdock said he spoke with Doug (one of the vendors). Town Manager Hewett explained the information should come from him as the Board's representative. Commissioner Murdock stated that Doug said there is no advantage of stainless versus aluminum. Town Manager Hewett stated one of the pieces of the increase from \$59,000 to \$68,000 included an additional coating on the backend of the genset. Aluminum will oxidize, but you can buy a lot of paint for \$8,000. Commissioner Tyner reviewed the maintenance agreement terms on the matrix. Town Manager Hewett confirmed his understanding of the terms. Commissioner Sullivan asked if Town Manager Hewett has any concerns in the difference in

tank size. Town Manager Hewett responded that is more of a dimensional footprint constraint. What it correlates to is it holds more gallons, so it affects the number of days you can operationally run. It burns about 10 gallons an hour. If we are good for three days, we are fine. Anything beyond that is a whole different set of circumstances. Commissioner Tyner asked Town Manager Hewett's preference. Town Manager Hewett read information from N.C.G.S. 143-131 on the Board's responsibilities for letting contracts under the informal bids process.

The Board talked about the differences in price, runtime and warranty between the John Deere and Caterpillar.

*Motion by Commissioner Tyner that the Board choose Caterpillar; second by Commissioner Murdock; approved by unanimous vote.*

Town Manager Hewett explained because this is close to the end of the fiscal year, he will encumber the funds that the Board has already approved, but they will need to be re-appropriated in the budget.

## **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Town Manager Hewett explained the pandemic has severely impacted how our budget process worked. He reviewed what needs to be done during the budget process. The Board did their objectives and ranked them. Department heads transmitted their rough drafts to him in late March. Since then we have been going through a daily cycle of what is going to happen, where we are and what may happen. The Board asked him to provide them with a draft formatted budget today. We will have a public hearing on June 16<sup>th</sup>. The Board cannot adopt the budget that night. Because of COVID-19, new legislation has come through since there are people participating from a distance, we must provide people with 24 hours to comment after the hearing.

Town Manager Hewett stated some of the Board's goals were overcome by events. One of the three legs holding the stool up is that the previous beach nourishment strategy is obsolete. We have FEMA projects that will take its place. Our tourism related revenues and expenses will likely be impacted, to what extent he does not know. The recommendation is to make up shortfalls from fund balances. We talked about pushing capital projects to the right. That is not necessarily a requisite in the proposed budget. The statute does provide for the adoption of an interim budget. He has not found anyone who has done it, is contemplating it or knows how to do it. In his research it appears to be overly complex, unknown, untried and untested. His advice to the Board is to not do it.

Town Manager Hewett stated from the April workshop, the Board's discussion and direction was to program three additional officers and pay for half of those through the BPART Fund. The three major recommendations in the draft budget proposal are to use the Beach & Inlet Capital Reserve Fund (BICRF) to pay for the Special Obligation Bond and some specific strategic beach and inlet expenses; reduce the tax rate by two cents from twenty cents to eighteen; and reduce the sewer assessment by 35%, from \$497.30 to \$370.

The BICRF has been made obsolete by the approval of FEMA Florence and Michael projects in the amount of \$24 million. FEMA Dorian is still pending at \$15 million more. We believe that will be approved soon. If we have a busy hurricane season as predicted, it may be more. That underscores the reality that the

previous strategy of setting up a capital reserve fund for beach nourishment has been made obsolete. At the time when the fiscal policy was adopted, we didn't have those hurricanes and we were saving for a date ten years out. This proposed budget recommends paying for all police expenses from the General Fund. When you bring in \$1.4 million out of the capital reserve fund, it is not necessary to make a contribution from the General Fund to the capital reserve fund because that strategy is obsolete and you don't have to augment the BPART Fund in order to make the payment on the special obligation bond. When he priced out the cost of the two and a half officers and the vehicles in the BPART Fund, it is pretty much offset by the transfer. It doesn't make sense to him to move money from the left pocket to the right pocket and pay the same bill.

Town Manager Hewett said the second recommendation is to reduce the tax rate by two cents. It is not necessary to transfer General Funds over to the BPART Fund or BICRF. At the next meeting, if the Board considers this to be a viable strategy, he will recommend that the Board cancel this year's budgeted transfer from the General Fund to the BICRF for the same reason. It doesn't make sense to pursue an obsolete strategy. The money is better held in the General Fund Balance because it will increase it to approximately 84%, which will have a positive impact on debt shopping.

Lastly, Town Manager Hewett is proposing to reduce the sewer assessment by a third, from \$497 to \$370. The assessment is authorized by special legislation and is only authorized for sewer facilities' capital costs. Since we retired almost \$700,000 of debt service this year, basically for the collection lines, we cannot charge that facility cost anymore. It recommends that even though we have an appropriation made in this year's budget to take care of the lift station upgrade, the strategy would be to borrow money for the existing upfit and the next one. You can only do your assessment based on the current debt. The sewer assessment is adopted like a tax rate. It will go down this year and then go back up next year.

The budget proposes the lease purchase of a vector truck. The one we have works, but we are starting to see the maintenance costs jumping up. The engineering professional services are included for the second water tower in addition to the sewer capacity study.

Canal dredging assessments are proposed to remain constant. The budget continues rollback and recycling services. It provides a merit pool of 3%. It proposes to continue the federal, state and local beach, inlet and waterway advocacy efforts. The second half of Brunswick Avenue paving is in there. Two trucks are proposed to be procured, one in the Water/Sewer Department and one in the BPART Fund.

Our current Fiscal Policy is the desired General Fund range is 40% – 70%, with any unassigned fund balance in excess of 70% at the end of the year being transferred to the BICRF. When our fund balance would go above that, as proposed at 84% estimated, we would need to not transfer that money over. It is counterintuitive.

In the proposed budget by fund we are right at \$3.3 million for the General Fund and close to \$5 million in the Water & Sewer Fund. The BPART Fund is bloated with \$24 million from Florence and Michael. The total fund is at \$27 million. The Canal Dredging Fund is at \$2.7 million. Once you fund the \$1.4 million out of the BICRF it will be down to \$1.8 million. Our special obligation bond is about \$1.3 million annually so if the pandemic keeps perpetuating, it will give us another year to pay that. On the Water Capital Reserve side, Town Manager Hewett is anticipating close to \$100,000 and \$47,000 for the sewer. Town Manager Hewett reviewed the layout of the budget book. This budget ordinance does not include a Capital

Improvement Plan. He suggested coming back in the fall to look at that. It is not a requirement of the Fiscal Control Act.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said while she can agree the beach strategy, which is \$10 million over 10 years, is made obsolete by the fact we will have a new set by doing the nourishment, having a beach reserve fund is not obsolete. A hypothetical five-year plan that would be for dune work, sand fence work and inlet costs that would be a baseline was getting worked on for the trip to D.C. She said the Town needs to understand an annual cost for normal maintenance, in addition to inlet costs. At some point, the Town will be faced with dwindling federal support for beach nourishment. She said that was another reason that the Board felt it was important to have money saved. Commissioner Kwiatkowski said she accepts the beach nourishment strategy from a couple of years ago is obsolete, but having the fund and coming up with an amount of money to put in it annually is not obsolete. She would consider still putting the money that the Board set aside this year into the fund. They will be taking money out, but there is no reason not to put the funds in from this year that we have.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said she is uncomfortable reducing the tax rate at this time because we don't know exactly what is going to happen. She said Town Manager Hewett has been conservative in his assessment of the revenues. Decreasing a tax is always easy, increasing it again is not. She said the Town is allowed before January 1<sup>st</sup> to do an adjustment to the tax rate. She proposed leaving the tax rate where it is and if the Board needs to do a reassessment, they can do it in November or December. The Board didn't set reducing the tax rate as an objective. Town Manager Hewett said changing a tax rate is a horror story. He would not recommend the Board even consider that. Those types of things are complex and only serve to confuse the public. Commissioner Kwiatkowski proposed keeping the tax rate at 20 cents. We do want to be as robust as possible when going into borrowing money. She said she is still puzzled about paying for all of the police from the General Fund. She asked if he is saying that we don't need to do the manipulation because you would basically be moving money from one place to the other; it doesn't do anything to any fund balance. Town Manager Hewett agreed that's correct.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said she understands that there won't be a Capital Improvement Plan. Seeing the vehicles in the plan was useful. She asked if everything that we needed to have scheduled for this year fit into this budget. Town Manager Hewett replied yes. Three of the vehicles are for the three officers. The others were replacement vehicles in accordance with our existing replacement policy. The assets are depreciated according to an accounting schedule.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said there is a merit pool of 3%. She asked if the county and other municipalities are using this. The Town just did an adjustment. She said 3% seems generous in a difficult time like this, without knowing what others are doing. Town Manager Hewett explained one of reasons we got behind was because we didn't do this kind of thing on an annual basis. The pool is based on merit; it doesn't mean everyone is going to get a 3% raise. He does not know what everyone else is going to do. People were compressed. This is an attempt to keep pace with good personnel practices over time. Commissioner Kwiatkowski proposed it be cut down. She thinks the idea of keeping pace with everyone is the right thing, but she questioned if 3% is the right number with what is going on. Town Manager Hewett said we are in day 82 of a global pandemic. The people working for you are the ones that are taking care of business. They need to have something to look forward to. He thinks as a management tool the Board should consider providing some type of incentive beyond coming to work and having the real and present danger of what they are doing on a daily basis. Commissioner Kwiatkowski still proposed it

be reduced. She proposed 1.5% She said we can see where we are later in the year. Industry has made decisions to cut increases. She is assuming other municipalities will be less generous in merit than in the previous years.

Commissioner Murdock said the beach is tremendously important. He asked if there are occasions the Town would not get reimbursed for damages to the beach strand. He thinks the Town should keep adding to it as long as they can. If we don't need it, maybe we can pay down some debt. Commissioner Murdock said he is with Commissioner Kwiatkowski on the tax rate. It will be very hard to get that back. We are in a time where he thinks the Town will lose some occupancy taxes and revenues. It will be very hard to reverse it. As far as the merit, Commissioner Murdock received a ton of blowback on the MAPS Study. He remembers days when bonuses were given at the end of year. He is 100% for rewarding people for doing outstanding work. It gives them something to look forward to. If the money is there, he is all for that, provided they have done a good job. He thinks there are some people that didn't get a raise that deserve a raise. Commissioner Murdock said if the Town does give a merit increase, he would just ask that the Board be privy to where it is going to go and an explanation on why.

Mayor Pro Tem Brown said we have three that want to keep the taxes where they are at. We don't know yet what we are facing. He talked to the lady at the Police Department at Ocean Isle Beach. The help we need is for 100 days of the year, during the summer. Ocean Isle has certified and noncertified law enforcement that they hire over the summer. Mayor Pro Tem Brown said if you add three officers and five vehicles, you are increasing the bureaucracy. He said there is no crime wave at Holden Beach, never has been and never will be. He asked why warning tickets aren't being issued. He thinks we need to look at adding part-time help for the summer. He said he can't see adding three officers to the Police Department. We need to keep in mind that we are in a pandemic. It is not the time to spend a whole lot of extra money. It is not a time to be giving tax cuts or to be raising big merit pay. Mayor Pro Tem Brown said if you want to give 1.5% that is well in line. He thinks that's where we need to be at the most. He said the Board needs to watch the money. He doesn't want to cut taxes right now. He asked if the FEMA money is in the checkbook. Town Manager Hewett replied that with an approved FEMA worksheet, the banks are willing to loan money based on the approved worksheets. It is as good as a federal note. You have to understand that you have spend the money first, then it is reimbursed.

Commissioner Tyner agreed about the tax increase. He would prefer banking that into savings. He also agreed about saving money for sand. He said he thinks the Town needs to keep putting money aside so if the day comes when there is damage to the beach and it is not FEMA reimbursable, we have money set aside to fix the beach. The beach is why people come here. He said he thinks whatever the Town could put aside each year into a reserve account prepares us for the future. He has managed people for 36 years. He knows what not getting a raise does for morale. When you have a small environment like you do here where there is not a lot of opportunities for advancement the way people get advancement is they leave and get another job somewhere else. The cost of hiring somebody and the cost of overtime to get someone to cover for that employee probably outweighs the salary increases. He is in favor of having a merit pool. That doesn't guarantee everyone gets a 3% raise. Commissioner Tyner said he has seen the downside of not doing it. As far as the policemen, he is the one that asked to put three in the budget to see what it would do from a cost standpoint. If you do the math, we are barely able to cover two people on each shift if everyone is here. He feels like we need more police in summer. He is in favor of doing something to have more police coverage in the summertime, whether it is hiring part-time people or hiring three fulltime people and knowing in the winter we may be a little overstaffed. We had a break-in of cars

at the pier last weekend. This is a seven-mile island. Trying to cover both ends of the island with two people a shift is tough. He agreed there is not a crimewave, but thinks part of that is the fact we have some police presence. He thinks on a small island police presence is important. He is in favor of spending more money on police.

Commissioner Sullivan said he disagreed about the tax rate. He has been asking for a tax decrease for the past three years. The math has always shown that the Town could absorb the tax decrease. The increase came because of the Central Reach Project (CRP). The people willingly voted for the CRP. We would have never borrowed \$12 million if we knew we were going to get the FEMA reimbursement money. We received \$4 million back from FEMA. Commissioner Sullivan said that money should have been given back to the people who paid the taxes. The \$256,000 that Town Manager Hewett spoke about in the slides that we don't put into the beach fund this year covers the two cents tax reduction. He thinks people should have had that benefit for the last two tax years as well. He is in favor of the tax decrease. Commissioner Sullivan is in favor of giving people a raise that is competitive with everyone else. If 3% is the right number he is for it. If it is 2%, that is what it should be as well. Doing that will keep from compression. His background is 25 years in law enforcement, he cannot see how the Town could afford to add three officers. If you look at page 3, the budget this year for Police Expenses was \$729,000. The proposed budget is \$1,300,000. We are talking about being worried about what the pandemic will do to our economics. As a former police officer, he wants these guys to be safe, but as a person who is trying to protect the purse strings of the people who live on the island and pay taxes, it is not justified by the numbers. Commissioner Sullivan looked at last year's activity reports and if you take out calls that are business checks or keep checks, the total number of calls are 1,851. If you do the math, it comes to less than two a shift. He said safety wise they need help, workwise it is not justified. He doesn't know what has been done about looking at part-time work. He would be in favor of having more help in the summertime. He suggested doing something about that for next year.

Commissioner Sullivan talked about the idea of putting money aside and building up the fund because at some point the Town will need to do Central Reach Project 2. When we do the FEMA project and get reimbursed it will be much wider than when the CRP was completed. Our children will have children on the beach before that sand is gone. He doesn't see the need to keep a large amount of money there, but there is definitely a need to keep a good size amount of money because every year we wind up putting more money in the Lockwood Folly because the government keeps cutting down their share. We need a considerable amount of money, but we don't need to keep building it. Commissioner Sullivan said he would say to take the \$250,000 that is supposed to go into it this year and reduce the taxes. He suggested doing what we need to do when it comes to police. The worst thing they could do is hire someone and next year say we can't afford to keep you. He said the Board needs to make the decision that makes sense for years to come when it comes to hiring people.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski asked what the Town would get with three more officers. She said a lot of the Town's problems are on the beach. She stated the beach rangers are great at filling in holes, but they are not really stopping dogs on the beach illegally in the hours they are not supposed to be there and off leash during the hours they are supposed to be there. Glass on the beach bothers her. She said there are things that we don't enforce at all and they are things that have to do with beach safety. She doesn't think the beach rangers will ever be able to do that; we need police on the beach. Commissioner Kwiatkowski asked how we get police on the beach from May to September.

Chief Dixon explained that three extra officers would add an extra officer to every shift. Right now, we have one officer that works by themselves for day and night shift. You will double your efforts and enforcement actions. We have one officer out there doing all the actions just named. The island is seven miles long, but there is over 20 miles of paved roadway on the island. The 100 days of summer are important, but it's the other 265 days when we have one officer trying to look after 2,500 houses making sure they are not getting broken into. He knows it is a huge expense, but sitting in his seat you need three officers. You need to get the shifts even so you can have two on a shift all the time. Part-time is doable. You still need to go through the same process. Before he gives them a gun, badge and a set of handcuffs, he wants to vet that person. To hire them for 100 days a year, you don't get to know them. If they get offered a fulltime job somewhere else, you have lost them and you are right back to the start of the process again. Chief Dixon said if you can hire fulltime officers and get them vested with the Town, they are more likely to stay. Ocean Isle uses part-time officers for their beach patrol. They still have 13 officers working their streets. Sunset Beaches has 15. Holden Beach is the only agency in the county working one officer a shift. He agreed Sunset Beach is a big area, but Ocean Isle is not that much different.

Commissioner Murdock asked what the minimum would be to get a uniformed officer to enforce the ordinances on the beach. He would like to see warnings first. The beach rangers aren't getting it done, people ignore them. He sees them talking to people, but unfortunately a lot of people don't pay any attention to them. He believes the Town needs a uniformed officer on the beach to enforce the ordinances. Inspections Director Evans said the beach rangers are doing what they are told to do. They do their job and do it very well. He said the program was given to the Inspections Department because the Police Department didn't want it. He has documentation that shows they are enforcing the rules. There was a conversation earlier in the year that there hasn't been a problem with cabanas this year because the beach rangers have been enforcing the policy. Inspections Director Evans said he has never heard one bad thing about the program since it was started. Commissioner Murdock said he is not saying they are not doing their job. He sees them talking to people, but a lot of people won't listen. He doesn't want to put the beach rangers in harms way with people who don't want to listen and get angry. Inspections Director Evans explained the program takes a lot of time and effort. He is not against moving it to the Police Department, but he doesn't want the beach rangers to hear things about them not doing their jobs. Commissioner Kwiatkowski said the impact over the last year and a half has dropped. She talked about an experience with a family with a dog on the beach. She said one of the biggest concerns from the public is problems with dogs on the beach. Mayor Pro Tem Brown said none of this is directed at Chief Dixon personally. The Board gets all the blowback from the citizens.

Mayor Pro Tem Brown asked about the vactor truck and trading in the old one. Town Manager Hewett said what is budgeted is a trade-in value for the lease purchase.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said the Board all agreed the Town should borrow money for lift station two. She asked if he is proposing borrowing money for three. Town Manager Hewett responded he would like to investigate borrowing money for two and at the same time borrowing the money for three. It is currently being taking out of fund balance. Commissioner Kwiatkowski asked if the additional debt will look detrimental when we need to borrow money for sand on the beach, waiting for reimbursement, if the Town borrows for both of those. Town Manager Hewett answered that those are enterprise funds. The viability of the system is what stands for the solvency of the enterprise fund. On borrowing the money for the special obligation bond, that is basically underwritten by the equivalent of a treasury note. Commissioner Kwiatkowski asked if he has an estimate for what the annual cost would be. Town Manager

Hewett replied that he is thinking the Town would need to borrow about \$4 million. We would have the option on how many years we want to borrow for.

Commissioner Murdock inquired if we could do anything to support the beach ranger program when they have difficulty dealing with somebody who is not going to listen and provide the enforcement. Chief Dixon responded that support is just a phone call away. If they make the phone call and the person complies and leaves, you get the same result. In order to take over the program it would either take a lot of overtime or hiring part-time people, which couldn't be done this year. You would need to start those exercises in January to have part-time people. Town Manager Hewett questioned what type of professional law enforcement officer you would be able to recruit when you tell them their job description is basically dog patrol. Mayor Pro Tem Brown said there are a lot of retired officers around here. Commissioner Kwiatkowski said it is dogs and alcohol.

*Motion by Commissioner Sullivan that we leave the two-cent reduction in taxes in the proposed budget.*

Commissioner Sullivan said his motion is to direct the town manager to put into the budget message for this year's budget a two-cent reduction in property taxes. Town Manager Hewett stated one of considerations that came forth in discussions with other managers and budget officers was the amount of tax collected. Our current tax collection rate is 99.04%. He doesn't know if what is going on right now will affect that. If we hold the tax rate the same, it doesn't mean we will collect the same amount of taxes.

*No second was made on the motion.*

*Motion by Commissioner Kwiatkowski that we reduce the merit increase from 3% to 1.5% at this time; second by Mayor Pro Tem Brown.*

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said she is making that number as a guess of what will be happening as people are addressing the reality of lost revenues. We can revisit things later in the year if things get better. Without knowing what other municipalities are doing, she is guessing they will also do less. Commissioner Sullivan inquired about the cost. Town Manager Hewett said on a \$1 million payroll, 3% of that is \$30,000. If you knock it down to 1.5%, it is \$15,000. He thinks the payroll is \$1.2 million.

*Mayor Pro Tem Brown wants to take his second back. Nobody seconded the motion.*

*Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Brown to set the merit pay at 2%; second by Commissioner Kwiatkowski.*

Commissioner Sullivan said what the Board is going to debate is whether to give a \$30,000 pool to the employees that they complement and credit or \$20,000. He doesn't see where it is worth it. He thinks the Board should leave the 3%. Commissioner Tyner agreed; we are talking about \$10,000. This is a small environment, with limited opportunity for advancement. The only advancement is going somewhere else. He learned today that one of our employees received a big raise for going somewhere else. Not giving annual raises will promote people looking for jobs elsewhere. He understands we don't know what others are giving. Commissioner Tyner said the Board could put it in the budget as 3% and if they have second thoughts, they can cut it back. He would rather put 3% in there. This is a budget document, not a policy document. Commissioner Murdock would like to see it done in a different way because of the MAPS Study,

but he also agrees to keep it in there. It makes people strive for something. He said please make sure it gets to where it needs to go this time.

*The motion passed by a 3 – 2 vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Brown and Commissioners Murdock and Kwiatkowski voting for the motion and Commissioner Tyner and Sullivan voting in the negative.*

*Motion by Commissioner Kwiatkowski that we do make the transfer into the sand fund this year that was budgeted. She knows we are taking money out of it for the special bond, Central Reach, but she thinks we should take the money that was budgeted this year and put it into the sand fund. We should continue to fund that. She doesn't see a reason not to this year. Commissioner Murdock seconded the motion.*

Town Manager Hewett said in this year's budget it is under the General Fund Expenses' tab, Governing Body. He asked for confirmation that what Commissioner Kwiatkowski is saying is to transfer to the beach renourishment fund the budgeted amount of \$230,576. Commissioner Kwiatkowski answered that is correct. Commissioner Sullivan said he doesn't agree. We have \$6 million now. We are taking \$230,576 and are going to add that to it, despite the fact we agreed we don't need the whole \$6 million anymore because the situation has changed. We need to have enough money to take care of emergencies or to dredge the Lockwood Folly. It is putting money where it will not be put to good use. Town Manager Hewett said as of last year the number was closer to \$6.8 million in total.

*The motion passed by a 3 – 2 vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Brown and Commissioners Murdock and Kwiatkowski voting for the motion and Commissioners Tyner and Sullivan voting in the negative.*

Commissioner Tyner asked if the Board needs to circle back to the tax issue. Town Manager Hewett said he thinks what the Board has done provides sufficient guidance.

Chief Dixon said the Police Department currently has eight positions in response to Mayor Holden's question. One of those positions is currently desk bound. Mayor Holden said as the Emergency Management Director, he is going to plead with the commissioners to please provide more officers. We do not have hurricanes year-round. When we do have hurricanes and we ask them to sleep at the metal building and they don't get to go home to their families, it is a tough time. They get worn down and they are subject to being called back any time, out in the wind and rain. He was here when we had ten officers and the commissioners were going to hire 11, then they went to nine, then eight. The number of homes and people on the island are increasing. We are considerably bigger than Ocean Isle geographically. Mayor Holden said in an emergency situation we don't have adequate coverage. When there is a hurricane situation borrowing from neighbors doesn't work because they are all busy. When he rides the beach, he understands what they are saying about the public not paying attention to the beach patrol. He asked what you are going to do if you have one officer on duty. He asked if they are going to drive down the beach. If the incident is on the west end and the officer has to get on the beach in the 800 block and drive slowly down the beach, then the island is unprotected. If you have two officers on duty in the same situation, now you have one officer with 2,500 houses. He said we are asking more of the Police Department than they can comfortably do. He is asking the Board to give consideration to expanding the Police Department.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski stated last year the Board got all the way to approving another officer, to having revenue neutral take it away. There had been talk about seeing how that went and then seeing if

another needed to be added the following year. She would like to see the Board add a fulltime officer. She asked if adding one officer and a couple of part-timers next year would help the situation. The Board can talk about adding a second one next year. You don't need to have police presence on the beach all the time. It needs to be there periodically. Random checks can do a lot.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said she would move that the Board authorize hiring another officer and have the chief attempt to get a couple for 100 days or four months to cover next summer and that be the direction that the Board take.

*Motion by Commissioner Kwiatkowski that we authorize hiring an additional officer and that we also authorize hiring two summer police officers for next summer (part-time).*

Commissioner Sullivan suggested that instead of hiring the two summer officers, the Board investigate the hiring off part-time. Hire one and study the feasibility of part-timers for next summer. Commissioner Murdock asked how long shifts are. Chief Dixon responded 12 hours.

*Commissioner Kwiatkowski changed her motion to we authorize the addition of a police officer to staff and that we investigate the option of hiring part-time officers for next summer; second by Commissioner Sullivan.*

Commissioner Tyner stated he feels like it needs to be more than one officer. If Chief Dixon thinks he needs three, the Board should give some deference to that. He would ideally like to see two and some part-time people in the summertime. Once again this is a budget document. He would rather have money for three officers in the budget, but Chief Dixon is not allowed to spend it until he comes back with the best plan to utilize the money. Commissioner Murdock said he also thinks the Town needs more than one. It is logistics, two shifts and two officers.

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said she would withdraw her motion if someone else wants to make a motion.

*Mayor Pro Tem Brown wants to second the motion.*

Commissioner Kwiatkowski said when she says package, she means the full package that goes with the officer and what they need to do the job.

Mayor Holden said that would give the Town eight officers on patrol. He asked about the officer on desk duty. Chief Dixon said he doesn't know how long desk duty will last. Mayor Holden stated there is nothing more embarrassing for the Town than to have someone that is here for a short period of time and they don't know where Food Lion or the fishing pier is. He is skittish of part-time police officers.

*The motion passed by a 3 – 2 vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Brown and Commissioners Sullivan and Kwiatkowski voting for the motion and Commissioners Tyner and Murdock in the negative.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Commissioner Sullivan to adjourn at 6:06 p.m.; second by Mayor Pro Tem Brown; approved by unanimous vote.*

---

J. Alan Holden, Mayor

ATTEST:

---

Heather Finnell, Town Clerk