

TOWN OF MCADENVILLE MINUTES AUGUST 8, 2023

The McAdenville Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers of Town Hall located at 163 Main Street, McAdenville N.C.

PRESENT:

Mayor Jim Robinette and Mayor Pro-Tem Reid Washam; Council Members: Carrie Bailey, and Joe Rankin. Also in attendance: Attorney Chris Whelchel, CPD Captain Debbold, and Town Administrator/Clerk Lesley Dellinger. Council members Jay McCosh & Greg Richardson were absent.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Robinette called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Pastor Walt Griggs, McAdenville Baptist Church, opened the meeting with prayer.

ADJUSTMENT & APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The August Agenda was approved as presented by motion of Joe Rankin, second by Mayor Pro-Tem Washam and unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The regular meeting and closed session minutes of July 11, 2023 were approved by motion of Carrie Bailey, second by Joe Rankin and unanimous vote.

NCLM PRESENTATION – MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTING SERVICES PROGRAM:

Julie Scherer and Autumn Lyvers with the NC League of Municipalities were in attendance to provide information and answer questions about the ARPA funded Municipal Accounting Services program (MAS). The MAS program is designed for smaller towns with populations under 2500 and will provide implementation and conversion assistance to Black Mountain Financial Software, accounting assistance with municipal financial professionals at NCLM, and IT/security assessments and assistance. Ms. Scherer stated that the League selected Black Mountain Software through a formal RFP process that emphasized ease of use and strong customer support. Personnel from the LGC helped with the evaluation process. The goal is to transition 40 to 60 small towns in NC to the new software, create a standard chart of accounts, and provide direct accounting assistance through December 2026. Accounting assistance includes audit prep, monthly oversight, and assistance with grant funding administration. The MAS program will cover all costs for implementing and conversion to new software as well as annual maintenance costs for the system for 1-3 years which is an estimated savings of \$88,865. The program also covers any additional costs associated with hardware upgrades required for a successful conversion. McAdenville's financial responsibility will begin after December 2026 including annual maintenance cost with Black Mountain Software estimated at \$11,000 annually. League Staff concluded their presentation and offered to answer questions.

Mayor Pro-Tem Washam asked if the software had incumbrance accounting ability and if the budgetary accounting interfaced directly with the general ledger? Julie Scherer replied yes to both questions. He then asked if the conversion would be a dual implementation? Ms. Scherer

replied no that town staff would have to do double entry into the two software systems during the conversion but that the League staff was working on procedures to reduce the load.

Mayor Robinette asked how many towns were currently participating and what the time frame for McAdenville would be. Ms. Lyvers replied that 59 towns had expressed interest, and that McAdenville's tentative conversion date would be January 2024. No additional questions were presented, and Mayor Robinette directed staff to place consideration for participation in the MAS program on the September agenda.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Captain Debbold was in attendance and stated that the monthly CPD report was included in the agenda packet and offered to answer questions or address any concerns of the board. Carrie Bailey questioned the increase in traffic violations from June to July. Captain Debbold replied that the increase is difficult to quantify but the department has been prioritizing traffic policing which most likely relates to the increase. Carrie Bailey stated that speeding in the traffic circle is often noticed and asked if that area could be focused on since school was back in session. She also requested that the mobile speed trailer be placed on Lakeview and Church to increase awareness of the posted speed limit for cut through traffic associated with the elementary school. Captain Debbold replied that he would put in a request for deployment of the mobile speed trailer and prioritize the traffic circle for policing. Mayor Robinette asked if Mockingbird Lane could also be prioritized for speeding violations. He stated that due to the curvy layout of the road it has been communicated by Chief Adams that the mobile radar trailer was not a good fit. Captain Debbold replied that handheld radar could be used to police Mockingbird and asked if there was a certain time of day that perceived speeding was more prominent. Mayor Robinette stated that work commuters from 7-8am and 5-6pm appear to be the biggest offenders.

STAFF REPORT:

Hallie Bentley PRV Replacement – Lesley Dellinger stated that the engineering plans for the replacement PRV are complete and have been submitted to the Division of Water Infrastructure for review. In addition, the easement needed for placement of the PRV at 215 Main Street on the Greenleaves property has been approved by Belmont Land. Once the project has been approved by DWI it will be ready for bid. The new construction estimate for the project is just under \$1 million at \$942,837.50. Lesley added that construction cost increases are due to the change in scope. (i.e., Upsizing the PRV and extension of the 12" water main, the NCDOT is requiring that the entire section of Main Street be repaved where the line extension is being placed along the curb, and material prices have more than doubled since the last estimate.) Staff negotiations with Belmont Land need to begin soon to determine if the Town can finance the project as previously planned with reserves or if grant funding will be required.

Rankin Road Extension Resurfacing: – Lesley Dellinger stated that the fiscal year 2024 budget prioritized resurfacing Rankin Road Extension with Powell Bill funding. The large tree whose root system had destroyed the road has been removed and the lowest quote for repair and resurfacing was received from Robert Mason & Son Paving for \$22,749.00. Since Robert Mason & Son paving is a preferred vendor for the Town and the quote was under the \$30K threshold for formal bidding, staff approved the contract after consulting with Mayor Robinette. The repair is scheduled for early September.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Robinette opened the floor for public comment. No comments were presented.

COUNCIL GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Mayor Pro-Tem Reid Washam read a prepared statement providing additional information on Council's considerations regarding the FY2023-2024 municipal tax rate. He requested the full statement be transcribed into the meeting minutes.

The Town's 2023-2034 Budget process presented the Town Council with some difficult decisions. We had four (4) budget workshops of 1 ½ to 2 hours in duration (all open to the public) and held a Public Hearing before the budget was adopted. Raising taxes on our citizens, including each of us, is not something we wanted to do. Even though this was not a unanimous decision, I think all the members realized property tax was not growing (and commercial personal property was decreasing) and expenses continue to increase.

In the last 3 years the value of commercial personal property has decreased \$13 million dollars (31%). This is related to changing operations in the three mill buildings previously operated by Pharr. An additional \$8 million (30%) of the remaining value will be lost this year with the closing of the Coats plant. This is a total lost property value of \$21 million. In comparison, the 11 new homes under construction in the McAdenville Village subdivision that will be added in 2024 have a total valuation of \$6.5-\$7 million.

Even without this loss in value, McAdenville has a very small tax base. For this reason, one penny (\$0.01) on the tax rate produces only \$17,000 in property tax revenues for McAdenville. In comparison, one penny (\$0.01) produces \$58,000 in property tax revenues for Lowell. A number of other Gaston County Municipalities have storm water fees, garbage collections fees and Fire District taxes in addition to Property Taxes. McAdenville does not have these additional fees.

McAdenville's Property Tax rate remains the lowest of all other municipalities in Gaston County.

The cost for providing Police and Fire Service has increased 25% since 2020. (Police and Fire make up 32% of the current operating budget.)

The cost of providing traffic control during Christmas has increased 85% since 2020. Costs for maintaining and improving aging infrastructure have increased.

Funds need to be expended on maintaining the Fire Station and Town Hall.

Because McAdenville has only two employees, a number of services requiring specific expertise (legal, engineering, code enforcement, zoning, grant writing, etc.) must be contracted. The costs for these services continue to increase.

McAdenville was recently awarded over \$7 million to replace and improve portions of its aging water system. The Town will incur costs associated with project management and grant administration.

There are a number of opportunities for Grant Funding that will require up front expenditures to process the grant applications.

The new budget includes funding for a new finance position. We currently have two employees which leaves the Town extremely vulnerable if either have to be out for an extended period of time. For that matter if either position is out for a short period this can cause response to Town needs to be neglected. Our Town Administrator functions in numerous capacities (finance officer, public works director, zoning administrator, code enforcement, police/fire/garbage coordinator, Christmas Town representative, grant administrator, and so on...)

My point is that even as a small town, there is a lot going on that must be managed and our current staffing is inadequate. The Town needs to take care of current needs as well as be prepared to take advantage of opportunities that become available such as State and Federal Grants, and our limited staffing makes this task extremely difficult.

Joe Rankin asked that the PowerPoint presentation on the FY23-24 budget that staff presented at the June 13th meeting be added to the Town's website.

CLOSED SESSION:

A Closed Session was held to consult with the Town's Attorney as allowed under **GS 143-318-11(a)(3)** by motion of Joe Rankin, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Washam at 7:03 PM.

Upon return from Closed Session at 7:29 PM, Mayor Robinette reported that the board had consulted with the Town's Attorney on administrative procedure related to a utility system merger and mediation related to expansion of a non-conforming use regulated by the Unified Development Ordinance. He stated that no action was taken and both issues were still under advisement.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM upon motion of Joe Rankin, second by Mayor Pro-Tem Washam and unanimous vote.

Jim Robinette, Mayor

Lesley Dellinger, Town Clerk