

MEETING REPORT

Town of Manteo

Board of Commissioners Annual Planning Retreat

Friday April 8, 2016

This document is intended as an internal report to the Town for use as an aid in the compilation of the official minutes of the meeting, as well as a reference for the staff and Commissioners.

PURPOSE

This meeting of the Manteo Board of Commissioners and the Town's Leadership team was coordinated to allow the Board time to develop enhanced communication skills and to revisit their priorities and initiatives, as well as to provide staff with direction and guidance in the creation of the upcoming budget. The Mayor and all but one Commissioner participated in most of the meeting, as well as both the Town Manager and the Assistant Town Manager. Commissioner Burke had to miss the entire meeting and Mayor Daniels had to be absent for the final portion.

THE MAYOR CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 8:30 AM

OBJECTIVES

Recognizing that the Mayor would be leaving early, the Board agreed the priority objectives were Governance, Budget and Discussion Items. Consequently, the agenda was pared down to the Governance session, the Budget discussion, and the Board discussion items.

GOVERNANCE

The team participated in a blind drawing exercise designed to illustrate (pun intended) the importance of the words we use and the intentness of our listening. This brought us to a discussion of the issues of

- Respect,
- Clarity,
- Focus,
- Decision, and
- Closure.

Understanding that great communication starts with all participants coming from a place of **respect**, we discussed the ways to address interpersonal conflict as they arise. It was agreed to rearrange the seating at the workshop venue to promote more collegiate interaction.

The staff explained how **clarity** is lacking from their perspective and how that hampers the execution of Board priorities. The group considered and agreed to attempt a 'next step, next step, next step' process to help promote clarity of expectations going forward.

The group came to agreement that board discussions could be improved by keeping a sharper **focus** on the issue at hand. All agreed it is the Mayor's responsibility and discussed several steps they each could take to help make his job easier. Chief among those were to write things down as you think of them and wait until the appropriate time to bring them up. Stream of consciousness at the Commissioners meetings is unhelpful.

We took up the issue of **decision** making and discussed the challenge of getting enough information early enough to process it mentally. They asked that the Planning staff brief them during the monthly workshop on P&Z upcoming issues and pending decisions.

The facilitator offered to work with the Mayor and Clerk to develop some methods of prompting more defined **closure** of specific issues during meetings.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Wickre offered to take over the Mayor's Merchant meetings after Dare Days. He gratefully accepted that offer, and Martha said she would keep the board updated.

Mayor Pro-Tem Collins relayed to the group that he had learned at a recent workshop that there is a best practice to change auditors every few years, and asked for information from staff about that. Finance Director Twiddy noted that it was true, and that she attempts to comply by putting the audit to bid every 5 years, but this last time the only bid received was from the existing auditing firm so they were re-awarded the contract. It was noted that there is undoubtedly a shortage statewide of auditing firms willing to work for small towns, and that this gets exacerbated by the increasing complexity mandated by the federal government and the Local Government Commission.

Mayor Daniels brought up the issue of youngsters damaging Magnolia Market. The group had a wide ranging discussion on this topic, during which Manager Skinner noted that additional lights have been ordered for the area. He also committed to a discussion with the Police Chief about increased surveillance and about delivering misbehaving juveniles directly to their parents rather than 'just chasing them off'.

Commissioner Peele requested that the issue of the kayak/boatramp/airboat issue be addressed and resolved before it becomes a problem. There was a question of having something at Marshes Light. The Board requested that Mr. Skinner furnish them with the kayak launch plans recently done by the Town of Nags Head.

At this point the Mayor had to leave the meeting and the remaining Commissioners continued.

2016/17 BUDGET DISCUSSION

The first item taken up was the Phase 1 Water and Sewer project in general, and whether a Stormwater component ought not to be included. The construction total has come in at \$577,000. Assistant Town Manager Twiddy will be working on a loan application during the 2016/17 year to pay for that.

Additional costs will be:

- \$34000 for preliminary plans, which Finance is expecting to cover in the budget, as well as
- an unknown amount for the Stormwater prelim plan to be paid through the Stormwater budget and
- \$24000 (est) for grit separators to be installed at the same time, also to be included in the budget.

The new Public Works building, estimated at \$140,000-150,000 is to be included in the budget.

There is no appetite to budget money for the Roanoke Village Swale issue.

There is no interest to develop a town picnic area with open picnic shelter, grills and bathroom.

The group does support the development of a fenced dog park with benches, signs, bag dispensers and trash cans, perhaps at Bowser Town, 4Corners or near the skate park. Manager Skinner and Commissioner Frye will flesh this idea out and present additional information before the budget presentations begin.

Employee pay rate comparison was reviewed briefly, a discussion ensued about pay studies. Finance Director Twiddy was asked to provide additional information before the budget presentations begin.

Evaluation

The group felt it would have been much better had everyone been able to attend, but that nonetheless it had been an immensely productive retreat. They liked the different format and they really felt they had made great progress on their governance issues. They were happy to skip the project updates, noting that they now report fairly regularly on them at BOC meetings so don't really feel the need to do that at retreat any more.

The group voiced a desire for having retreat 2x a year, and agreed to do this again in October. Manager Skinner will set it up, and the facilitator offered to communicate with each of them individually to plan the agenda of that retreat.

With that a motion was made at 4:00 pm by Commissioner Wickre seconded by Commissioner Peele and the meeting was recessed to April 20, 2016 at 4:00 pm at the Manteo Town Hall

This report submitted by Madeleine Henley, Walking Stick Associates April 15, 2016.

Adopted this 4th day of May, 2016

Jamie Daniels, Mayor

ATTEST:

Becky Breiholz, Town Clerk