TOWN OF PAWLEYS ISLAND
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Town Hall – Conference Room | 323 Myrtle Ave | Pawleys Island SC 29585
12/9/2024 – 5:00 PM

PRESENT: Mayor Brian Henry, Guerry Green, and Sarah Zimmerman

STAFF PRESENT: Daniel Newquist, Corey Higdon, and Chief Fanning

ADDITIONAL PRESENT:

ABSENT: Ashley Carter, Rocky Holliday

1) **CALL TO ORDER / OPENING REMARKS**
   - **Mayor Henry called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.**

2) **PUBLIC HEARING – Ordinance 24-02: Adoption of the 2025 Annual Budget**
   - There were no public comments made.

3) **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
   - There were no public comments made.

4) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - 11-11-2024
   - **Mayor Henry requested a motion to approve or amend the 11-11-2024 Town Council minutes. Mrs. Zimmerman motioned to approve the minutes. Mayor Henry seconded the motion.** No further discussion. **All voted in favor.**

5) **REPORTS AND UPDATES**
   a) Police Report

   Chief Fanning began the police report by stating that the Town's Police Department had a quiet month of November with no extraordinary events to report for the month. Mr. Green raised a question regarding November's traffic report, highlighting that the percent change for the year-to-date totals display a decrease for the 2024 totals versus the 2023 totals, although the numbers themselves display an increase. Chief Fanning clarified that the percent change decrease was a mistake, and the total traffic for 2024 has increased from the 2023 totals.

   b) Building Report

   Mr. Newquist prefaced the building report by updating Council on the Pawleys Pier Village pier project. He noted that Pawleys Pier Village has applied for their South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) – Bureau of Coastal Management permit (formerly known as OCRM). He explained that their application is currently on public notice on the Department's website through December 26, 2024. Mr. Newquist displayed to Council the documents available to view on the SCDES website regarding the project, including several plans and details about the proposed new pier. He also showed how one can submit a public comment regarding the project on the website.

Mr. Green questioned if the Town was aware of the estimated cost of construction for the new pier, to which Mr. Newquist stated that he is unaware as of now. Mr. Newquist continued to elaborate on the details that Pawleys Pier Village has made him aware of, such as the new pier occupying the same footprint as the pre-Hurricane Ian pier did, the pier utilizing wood and timber construction materials, and the current target start date for construction is Fall of 2025. He noted that the contractor that Pawleys Pier Village is working with on this project is Cape Romain Construction, who he commended for being responsive to any updates he has requested. Mr. Green asked what the life expectancy of the pier is considering it is using similar materials to previous piers that have been damaged or destroyed by previous storm events, citing that in the past 35 years the Pawleys Pier Village pier has been washed away on two occasions. Mr. Green also noted that various other jurisdictions have constructed cement/concrete piers in recent years. Mr. Green continued to question if the Pawleys Pier Village has insurance for if the pier washes away and damages any properties, and if they would be liable in that event. Mr. Newquist and the Council agreed that these are valid questions that the Town can find answers from Pawleys Pier Village and the contractor in the coming months. Mayor Henry closed out the discussion regarding the new pier project by questioning when Pawleys Pier Village would have to submit a building permit with the Town by, to which Mr. Newquist stated that he does not have an exact date, but the Town would need extensive time to review a project of this scale.

Mr. Higdon continued the remainder of the building report, stating that 10 new building permits were issued in the month of November, making it one of the more active months in 2024 in terms of the building department. This brought the total permits issued in 2024 to 111. He continued to elaborate that none of the permits issued were very notable projects other an extensive interior remodel at 192 Atlantic Avenue. Mr. Higdon stated he took a look around the island to check-in on significant projects, noting that there is noticeable progress on several of the new home construction projects on the island. He also noted that there is an abundance of work throughout the island as the Town heads deeper into the offseason. Mr. Higdon referenced the recent Architectural Review Board meeting which resulted in approved designs for 139 Atlantic Avenue and 520 Myrtle Avenue. Lastly, Mr. Higdon updated Council on a contractors meeting that the Town is anticipating scheduling for late Winter/early Spring to allow for contractors to meet with the Town and the Town's Building Department service provider, SafeBuilt, to discuss any questions or concerns they have with the building permit process.

c) Financial Report

Mr. Newquist prefaced his report by stating that he has been closely monitoring the Town's year-end accounts and budget. He continued to state the Town's Local Governments Investment Pool account has performed very well, accumulating interest that surpassed the projected budget for 2024. Likewise, the Town had outperformed the projected 2024 budget for local accommodations tax collections, exceeding the anticipated budget by over $11,000 with two remaining months of collections for the year. He noted that the state A-Tax collections also exceeded the anticipated budget. Mr. Newquist clarified that he is continuing to be conservative with the projected 2025

budget for these categories, keeping the anticipated revenues near the same value. He highlighted the Town's legal expenses as a notable expenditure, with the year-to-date expenses exceeding the budgeted amount for 2024. Lastly, he noted that the building permit volume for the year was higher than anticipated, so the expenditures for the Town's building service was higher than budgeted for the year. Mrs. Zimmerman questioned what percent of the building department's revenue is allocated to the Town, to which Mr. Newquist explained is 10% of the total revenue gets allocated to the Town as established in the contract with SafeBuilt.

6) BUSINESS

a) Second Reading- 2025 Annual Budget Ordinance

Mr. Newquist began his second review of the 2025 Annual Budget Ordinance by thanking Council for their productive discussion and recommendations during the first reading of the budget during the November Town Council meeting. He highlighted two changes he made in the 2025 budget from the first reading to the second reading, with the first being a shift from $5,000 to $25,000 in anticipated revenues from the underground wiring project. The second change was a reduction in the budgeted expenditures from $9,000 to $7,000 for the budget line in the public works section: supplies. This reduction was due to the year-to-date expenditures in 2024 for this budget category.

Mr. Newquist went through the 2025 budget highlighting notable changes and key items, beginning with the Town's anticipated revenues. In terms of the revenue budget section, he noted that the Town is projecting similar local and state accommodation tax collections from 2024 to 2025, there is an increase in anticipated revenues from special events due to the success of Fourth of July t-shirt sales and other various events, and that grant money received in 2024 is carrying over to 2025. Continuing to expenditures, he began by highlighting changes in the Administration Department category. These changes included special events expenditures increasing to coincide with the increase in revenues for events, legal service expenses increasing, and health insurance decreasing due to Mr. Green no longer being included on the Town's health insurance plan.

For the Police Department category, Mr. Newquist elaborated on a 4.0% salary increase for a cost-of-living adjustment and merit performance. He also noted that in 2024, the Police Department needed to purchase a new vehicle which ended up falling under the projected budget, but the Town does not anticipate any significant purchases for either the Police Department or Administrative Department in 2025. Moving on to the public works category, Mr. Newquist highlighted increases in flood mitigation expenditures due to the ongoing drainage master plan as well as the increase in the trash budget line due to the purchase of ten new Big Belly trash receptacles using ARPA funds. Closing out his presentation for the second reading of the 2025 annual budget, Mr. Newquist noted the addition of the building department budget section and the renaming of the prior buildings section to community facilities to ensure there is no confusion between the newly added building department section and the buildings section.

Mayor Henry opened the discussion regarding the underground wiring project and the total value of payments still owed to the Town, which he clarified that there is a total of $63,000 still owed across the island for the underground wiring project. The collection of payments for the project began in September of 2014 and was intended to collect a $350 annual payment over the following 10 years from each property owner on the island. Mayor Henry discussed the details of the outstanding $63,000, stating that some of the properties still owe money due to miscommunications during the sale of a property, noting that 15 of the 51 total properties that have an outstanding balance were sold during the ten-year period following the start of the project. He also noted that there are several properties that still owe the full $3,500 balance for the property. Mrs. Zimmerman elaborated that there was no contract signed by property owners to pay the balance, making the payments voluntary. Mayor Henry recommended that council sends letters to those who still owe balances, noting their outstanding balance and requesting that the owners pay the outstanding balance. In cases in which the property was sold, he suggested that the letter explains the project and the remaining balance owed in case it was not disclosed to the buyers during the sale of the property. Mayor Henry also suggested that the Town does not budget $25,000 in revenue from the project for 2025, to which Mr. Green agrees. The Council rather suggested amending the budget to include $15,000 in collections.

Mayor Henry requested a motion to approve the 2025 Annual Budget ordinance. Mr. Green motioned to approve the 2025 Budget with an amendment to the underground wiring revenue budget line, reducing the total budget to $15,000 from $25,000 for this category. Mrs. Zimmerman seconded the motion. No further discussion. **All voted in favor.**

b) Pawleys Creek Study/Committee Formation - Discussion

Mayor Henry started the discussion by explaining to Council that the first step in forming the committee and progressing with the Pawleys Creek Study is identifying what the primary issue/concern for the creek is. He listed the health of the creek and the creek filling in as possible concerns to look deeper at with the formation of a Pawleys Creek Committee. Mayor Henry noted that during the Labor Day meeting at the chapel, several individuals expressed interest in participating in the Pawleys Creek Study Committee, stating that not only residents of the island but also residents of the creekside of the inland portion of Pawleys Island expressed interest. He stated that a focus of the committee would be to identify that if the creek is dredged, the committee would have to know if the bottom sediment is primarily sand that could be used on the beach or mud that would cost money to remove. Mayor Henry suggested that the Town and committee uses longtime residents as a source of information regarding the conditions of the creek in the present day versus the past. Aerial footage could also be a valuable resource. He also suggested that the committee could collaborate with Seamon Whiteside, the Town's consultant in charge of the Drainage Master Plan, to see if dredged material could be utilized in a berm to improve flood mitigation. Council decided to aim for the formation of the committee during the first quarter of 2025 and have the committee define the focus

of the Pawleys Creek Study prior to COC's proposal for the study. Chief Fanning suggested that the Town could collaborate with Coastal Carolina University or the North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve for help on identifying the health of the creek.

7) COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Mayor Henry referenced his recent meeting with the Pawleys Island Civic Association and requested suggestions from council members on ideas for projects the Town could utilize donations for. Mrs. Zimmerman suggested the idea of a new Mobi Mat for an additional beach access. Mr. Newquist referenced an idea to update the sign at the South End parking lot to further improve the ongoing improvements at the lot. Mr. Green suggested the addition of water fountains throughout the island for walkers and runners to utilize. Mayor Henry provided the idea of restoring the historic signs throughout the island. Lastly, Mr. Newquist suggested the idea of adding bike racks at locations on the island.

8) ADJOURN

APPROVED 1/13/25 **DATE**

ATTEST 1/14/25 **DATE**