

**CITY OF NEW BERN  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN RETREAT – DAY 2  
FEBRUARY 3, 2018 – 8:00 A.M.  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES’ CONFERENCE ROOM  
303 FIRST STREET**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Mayor Dana Outlaw; Aldermen Sabrina Bengel (arrived at 8:06 a.m.), Jameesha Harris, Robert Aster, Johnnie Ray Kinsey, Barbara Best, and Jeffrey Odham. A quorum was present.

**Also in Attendance:** Mark Stephens, City Manager; Kristen Culler, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Blanco, City Clerk; and J.R. Sabatelli, Director of Finance.

Mayor Outlaw opened the meeting with prayer. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

**Continue of Strategic Planning Discussion**

Chris Estes, the consultant, continued this session with a review of the remaining potential objectives that were prepopulated by Mr. Stephens and Mrs. Culler, which were Items 4, 5 and 6. Discussion began with the topic of economic development (Item 6). Alderman Bengel described the vision as an effort to redevelop the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative area. A desire to establish a Redevelopment Commission was expressed, and Mr. Stephens suggested Tyler Mulligan with the UNC School of Government be brought in to share information and offer guidance prior to the formation of a Redevelopment Commission.

Other items discussed at length during the review of the remaining objectives included:

- Stormwater fees and the possibility of offering a service to clean privately-owned ditches for a fee;
- Conduct cost-of-service studies for utility rates and service fees;
- Alternative revenue sources for city-owned cemeteries, perpetual maintenance, and review of fees; and
- The role of the tax rate in sustaining the City and supporting desired projects.

During yesterday’s strategic discussion, a list of additional areas of concern was created. That list was expanded upon today to include a need to review conferences to attract retirees to New Bern, a desire for deeper reviews of stormwater and fire response, and discussion of a redevelopment “toolbox”.

After defining all objectives, the Board was distributed a hard copy of the objectives. Mr. Estes asked each member to mark their top five priorities. Upon tallying the responses, the most consensus centered on the following (identified on the list as Items 6a, 5a, and 2a):

- Drive redevelopment in the Choice Neighborhood Initiative area;
- Improve emergency response times to meet acceptable service delivery benchmarks; and
- Improve storm sewer and drainage capability.

Mrs. Culler reviewed a pre-populated list of initiatives categorized by current projects and Board and staff initiatives. The list was compiled in an interactive spreadsheet that permitted Mr. Sabatelli to show the financial impact based upon which projects remained active. The list was further manipulated to reflect the projects associated with the Board's items of consensus and what budgetary impact those projects would have. For the purpose of seeing the impact of other items on the objective "wishlist" that did not make the consensus, the spreadsheet was again influenced to reveal the impact from those projects as well. As a result of these projections, a brief discussion ensued on fund balance, the current informal fund balance policy, and establishing a fund balance policy. The pros and cons of having a high fund balance were noted.

At the conclusion of this session, the Board expressed a desire to discuss the "deep-dive" topics of stormwater, redevelopment and fire response at a work session. Alderman Odham made a motion to hold a special work session on February 16, 2018 at 1 p.m. at Development Services' Conference Room, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. The motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Culler noted Matt Montanye, Director of Public Works, would be on vacation February 6<sup>th</sup>, so the topic of stormwater will be reviewed at a later work session.

### **Other**

Alderman Harris suggested presentations be made only at the first meeting of each month with the second meeting reserved solely for business items. Alderman Bengel expressed concurrence, and Mr. Stephens stated an effort would be made to schedule presentations at just the first meetings.

Alderman Bengel inquired about the process for placing items on the agenda and whether there is a desire to continue for two Board members to agree. It was confirmed this process will continue with the initiating alderman being responsible for reaching out to another Board member to obtain the second approval.

Social media was also discussed, including public records law as it applies to comments on personal pages. With respect to a Facebook page for the Board of Aldermen, concern was expressed about an alderman having the ability to express their own opinion or speak on behalf of the entire Board. It was felt the City's Facebook page should be the source for communicating facts to citizens. Alderman Bengel suggested Frayda Bluestein from the UNC School of Government could speak to the Board on this topic, if needed.

(Note: The agenda provided for a legislative update and further discussion into deep-dive topics. Time did not permit for these agenda topics to be covered.)

**Closed Session**

Alderman Kinsey made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318 (11)(a)(6), seconded by Alderman Bengel. The motion carried unanimously, time being 11:42 a.m.

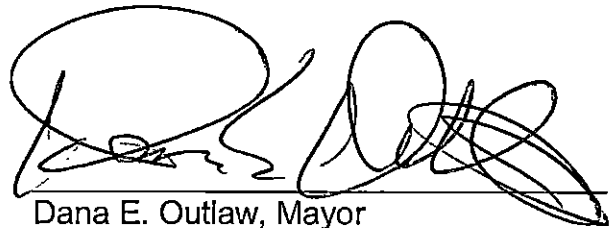
**Adjourn**

Alderman Aster made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Bengel. The motion carried, time being 12:42 p.m.


The attached documents are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

NOTE: For additional details and information on the Board of Aldermen meetings, please visit the City of New Bern's website at [www.newbern-nc.org](http://www.newbern-nc.org). Video and audio recordings of the meeting have been archived.

Minutes approved: February 13, 2018



Dana E. Outlaw, Mayor



Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk