

**City of New Bern
Board of Aldermen Work Session
September 17, 2019 – 5:00 P.M.
City Hall Courtroom
300 Pollock Street**

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

Roll Call: Mayor Dana Outlaw; Aldermen Sabrina Bengel, Jameesha Harris, Robert Aster, Johnnie Ray Kinsey, Barbara Best, and Jeffrey Odham. Absent: None. A quorum was present.

Also in Attendance: Mark Stephens, City Manager; Michael Scott Davis, City Attorney; and Brenda Blanco, City Clerk.

Mr. Stephens reviewed the agenda topics.

(Mayor Outlaw momentarily stepped out of the room at 5:01 p.m., returning seconds later at 5:01 p.m.)

1. Update on FEMA Reimbursements.

J. R. Sabatelli, Director of Finance, shared a PowerPoint presentation to provide an update on costs, insurance proceeds, and FEMA reimbursements associated with Hurricane Florence. Costs to date are almost \$12.6 million, and additional costs of \$24-25 million are anticipated. Mr. Sabatelli stated the City has received \$1.9 million in insurance proceeds and additional insurance funds are expected. Corey Spaulding, Project Manager with Disaster Recovery Services, explained the insurance policy limits and the fact that deductibles were not applied to the wind nor flood claims because the claims exceed the limits. He also explained in depth the delays that have been experienced with obtaining a determination memo from FEMA, to which the City is preparing an appeal. Mr. Spaulding described issues relative to drainage ditches and potential options going forward.

Mr. Spaulding said he proposed to Mr. Stephens earlier in the day that an appointment be scheduled with someone at FEMA who has the ability to make a decision and move forward on the ditch and Stanley White Recreation Center ("SWRC") projects. He also proposed that the City request that person to obligate the \$1.5 million that FEMA has already validated and allow the City to use that money for start-up costs to remove sediment and trees throughout the drainage system and for start-up money to be appropriated for engineering and monitoring costs associated with the project. If they agreed to that, the plan would be to accelerate a Request for Proposal for the work, a monitor, and an engineering firm. Once work initiates, project worksheets would be submitted to FEMA for reimbursement.

Mr. Stephens suggested the Board possibly give direction for staff to reach out to elected federal representatives and the White House regarding a meeting with the Federal Coordinating Officer (“FCO”) and/or the Head of Public Assistance (“PA”) for support in moving the City’s claims forward. Mayor Outlaw suggested some of New Bern’s neighboring cities that are having the same issues be invited to join the meeting. Alderman Aster stated Senator Thom Tillis was willing to meet in New Bern with the FCO, and Alderman Aster felt it would be important to have “Dot” (Dorothy Henderson-Bell, PA Officer) attend from NC Emergency Management. Alderman Odham suggested both Senator Thom Tillis and Senator Richard Burr, as well as Congressman Greg Murphy, be in attendance.

In reviewing SWRC, it was noted the City participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and must remain in compliance with the program. If the SWRC were fixed at its current location and not elevated, it would be noncompliant and citizens would lose the ability to obtain flood insurance. Mr. Spaulding explained the 50% rule in determining FEMA eligibility. He further explained the options for the SWRC building would be to tear it down and build a new building, elevate the current building, or dry flood-proof the building to bring it into compliance. He described the issues with flood-proofing and why that would not be recommended. He also explained issues with the SWRC claim moving forward and the exhaustive discussions that have been held with the State and FEMA.

2. Discussion of Elevator Study for City Hall.

Mr. Stephens noted the Board had previously been provided a copy of the elevator study prepared by MBF Architects.

(Alderwoman Harris momentarily stepped out of the room at 6:24 p.m. She returned at 6:25 p.m.)

He then reviewed enlarged drawings of the three proposed options.

(Aldermen Kinsey and Best momentarily stepped out of the room at 6:30 p.m. Alderman Kinsey returned at 6:33 p.m., and Alderman Best returned at 6:35 p.m.)

The option shown on sheets A-101 and A-102 provided for an elevator shaft in the location of the current vault and an exterior ramp on the back of the building. Option A-103 provided for a small annex on the back of the building with an elevator incorporated into the annex. The option depicted on A-104 provided for an office annex that could accommodate the relocation of Development Services and Human Resources from their current location to City Hall. This option also maintains the historic integrity of the building. If the third option were chosen, the City would utilize its parking lot across the street for employee parking. The parking spaces that are currently leased in that lot would need to be relocated, possibly to one of the current “free” lots. Alderman Odham inquired about the ability to utilize the basement for additional office space and keep the existing parking lot behind City Hall. He questioned whether that would yield cost savings.

(Alderman Aster momentarily stepped out of the room at 6:53 p.m.)

Rough cost estimates provided by the architect are: \$1 million for Option A-101/A-102; \$1.5 million for Option A-103; and \$5 million for Option A-104. An estimate for annual debt service was provided, which included various loan amounts, financing terms, and interest rates. Estimated required tax rate increases were also included with the debt service information.

(Alderman Aster returned to the room at 7:00 p.m.)

Noting the costs incurred during Hurricane Florence and the slow recovery of funds through FEMA, Alderwoman Harris questioned the expense of the project. Mr. Stephens projected it would take three years before the City would begin to actually incur significant expense. He stated the initial expenditures would be minimal permit fees, etc. Alderman Bengel asked about the possibility of securing funds through grant opportunities or resiliency funds, especially if the Emergency Operations Center (“EOC”) could be relocated to City Hall.

Alderwoman Harris made a motion to pursue option A-104, seconded by Alderman Odham. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Alderman Odham made a motion to take a 10-minute recess, seconded by Alderman Bengel. The motion carried unanimously 7-0, time being 7:17 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:27 p.m.

3. Discussion of Stormwater Drainage.

Matt Montanye, Director of Public Works, provided a brief overview of the Stormwater Division. He was joined by George Chiles, Engineer, and Avery Smith, Stormwater Superintendent. Mr. Montanye shared a PowerPoint presentation to review the levels of service, stormwater budget, as well as past and current projects. With respect to the projects shown on slides numbered 8-11, the items delineated in black print would be paid through the stormwater budget, and items in red would be paid through the \$1.5 million stormwater project fund. Hurricane Florence items were delineated in purple. Alderman Best noted Oaks Road was not included in the list of projects. Mr. Montanye stated that area would be handled by in-house staff.

Mr. Montanye announced the City would be audited next year for compliance with the MS4 program. He recommended a consultant be obtained to perform a pre-audit, the cost of which is anticipated between \$15,000 to \$20,000.

(Alderman Kinsey stepped out of the room at 7:55 p.m., returning at 7:58 p.m.)

One of the biggest public misconceptions is that the City owns drainage ditches behind residents’ homes. Those ditches are privately owned, although the City may have easements that run along the property. It is the property owner’s responsibility to keep the ditches clear and free of debris. The Duffyfield canal is

in the water table and does not need to be dredged or dug any deeper. Most blueline streams throughout the City will always contain water. Mr. Montanye suggested a stormwater advisory committee be formed and consist of staff, a few Board members, and some citizens. Mr. Davis suggested a stormwater working group instead of a formal committee.

After Alderman Bengel mentioned drainage issues along Spencer Avenue that were potentially associated with roadwork, Mr. Chiles provided an update on the Spencer Avenue work and noted paving should begin the first of next week. Alderman Bengel asked for that information to be provided to her in writing so she could share it with residents.

At Alderman Best's request, Mr. Chiles explained what dictates the sizing of drainage pipe. The need to potentially make changes to the City ordinances was discussed. Mr. Montanye also suggested the addition of a City inspector for the sole purpose of inspecting new drainage and existing infrastructure. He felt Public Works could absorb the cost of the position through the retirement of a current employee at the end of October. Mr. Stephens suggested any ordinance changes first be reviewed through a cost study and cautioned about making changes that may discourage future development.

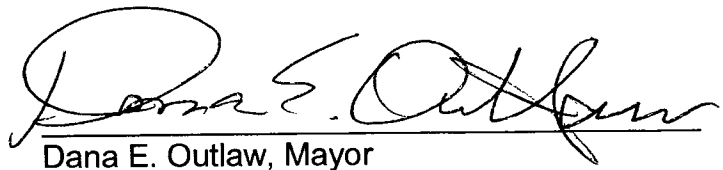
4. **Adjourn.**

Alderwoman Harris made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. The motion carried unanimously, time being 8:38 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.newbernnc.gov. Video and audio recordings of the meeting have been archived.

Minutes approved: October 8, 2019


Dana E. Outlaw, Mayor


Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk