

**TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**  
**TOWN COUNCIL PRE-BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**August 18, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.**

The Seabrook Island Town Council held a 2021 pre-budget workshop on August 18, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. to discuss priorities for the upcoming 2021 budget. The meeting was conducted as a video conference using Zoom and was simultaneously made available to the public via YouTube live stream and by conference call, all in keeping with practices adopted to address the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Mayor Gregg, Councilmembers Crane, Finke, Goldstein and Fox, Town Administrator Cronin and Town Clerk Allbritton participated in the meeting. The Town Clerk confirmed that notice of the meeting was properly posted, and requirements of the SC Freedom of Information Act were met.

Town Administrator Cronin began the meeting by reviewing the 2021 budget calendar with Council. He stated that the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee will meet on August 27 and we will have their recommendations for using the 2021 State Accommodations Tax funds. The Town Administrator and the Town Clerk will prepare a draft budget that will be submitted to Mayor Gregg by September 16, 2020. The Mayor will review, make modifications and distribute to Council by October 1, 2020. The 2021 draft budget will then be reviewed by Council at budget workshops scheduled for October 15, October 22 and October 29, 2020. It is anticipated that first reading of the 2021 budget ordinance will take place on November 17, 2020, and the public hearing and second reading will be held on December 15, 2020.

Town Administrator Cronin stated that business license revenue was not affected very much in 2020 by COVID-19 because the Town had already collected most of the business license revenue by the time the pandemic began. Because most of the businesses pay on gross income from the previous year, there will be a much larger impact on revenue for 2021. It is estimated that General Fund revenue in 2021 will be about \$1,100,295, or a \$336,000 reduction, compared to the original adopted budget for 2020. State Accommodations Tax is estimated to be about \$120,000 in 2021. The first \$25,000 and 5% of the balance goes into the General Fund. County Accommodations Tax was not distributed in the last half of 2020, none will be received in the first half of 2021 and probably none will be received in the last half of 2021. The Town Administrator stated that, for now, the budget estimate is just \$30 for interest that will be earned on the previous County Accommodations Tax fund balance. Council may have to revisit that sometime during the Town's 2021 budget year if the County does have funds to distribute the last half of 2021. Alcohol Tax is projected to remain about the same as our amended 2020 budget (\$3,100). At this time, it is anticipated that total revenue will be around \$1,200,000, which is about \$100,000 less than our amended 2020 budget that was adopted last month. There are no dedicated revenue sources for our Designated Funds; but, when we are doing the 2021 budget, surplus funds could be transferred from the General Fund into the Town's Designated Funds for future capital projects.

The Town Administrator turned the meeting back over to the Mayor so that Council could give their priorities for the 2021 budget.

**Mayor Gregg's Priorities:**

- Maintain Beach Patrol service at the current level, including servicing the four trash cans on the beach. The Town Administrator commented that we have been spending down the surplus in the State Accommodations Tax fund balance to help pay for Beach Patrol. Beyond one more year, there will not be a surplus in that account and Council will have to determine how to continue funding if left at its current level. Decisions will have to be made as to whether the Town wants to continue to fund events – Billfish Tournament, Alan Fleming Tennis Tournament, etc. – from State Accommodations Tax.

**Councilman Crane:**

- Councilman Crane had sent an email prior to the meeting detailing his priorities and he asked that this email be made an attachment to the minutes. Councilman Crane's priorities dealt with Emergency Preparedness/Response items, AirMedCare contract renewal, pathway safety, fireworks, subscription services (CodeRed) and completing the Development Standards Ordinance rewrite. Councilwoman Finke recommended, if Council needs to cut expenses, to only have one tabletop exercise in years when there are no new councilmembers but hold two exercises when there are new members.

**Councilwoman Finke:**

- Maintain Beach Patrol and their servicing of the trash cans on the beach
- Through the pandemic, more enforcement of Town ordinances by having at least one full time equivalent Code Enforcement Officer
- Pathway safety, mostly the flooding issues
- Finish the DSO Project
- Continue to have the Dolphin Education Program at some level, even if at a reduced rate.
- Pamphlet/Community Promotions – Councilwoman Finke stated that she would like to explore with the Seabrook Island Birders the possibility of going to a four-panel brochure and use the other two panels for Turtle Patrol and the Dolphin Education Program. Mayor Gregg stated that he had rather put the Community Promotions line item back in the budget instead of giving money to the birders, Turtle Patrol, etc. so that they can have a pathway to access funding rather than having it on an ad hoc basis. Councilwoman Finke stated that she is fine either way if there is a pamphlet that has the dog ordinance included in it that can be given to visitors. If Community Promotions is added to the budget, she recommended putting \$3,500 to \$3,600 in the line item.
- Signage improvements – at least the welcome sign. Town Administrator Cronin commented that he is looking into piggy backing on a contract with the Club to get the Town sign painted.

**Councilwoman Fox:**

- Beach Patrol

- Roadway Deterioration – Councilwoman Fox commented that fixing flooding issues is good but, if the road is deteriorating, maybe it needs to be fixed.
- Brochure – Thinks it is a good idea to get all the information out in one brochure (birds, turtles, dog rules, etc.).
- Agrees with cutting one of the tabletop exercises if we are trying to save money.

Councilman Goldstein:

- Fully Funding Beach Patrol
- Roadway Drainage Design – Councilman Goldstein commented that we may want to delay the engineering, for which we had budgeted \$100,000, but set aside some of that money for road maintenance. He stated that, while Council is working on the budget, this might be a good time to talk about how the Town is going to pay for work that will be done to the road in the next few years. Town Administrator Cronin reminded Council that the lowest point of the roadway is at the gate house. Whatever the Town does to their portion, will affect the gate house and Bohicket Marina. Mayor Gregg said that, it was his understanding, that the \$100,000 was for engineering costs for raising the roadway. Councilman Goldstein agreed but stated that, if we are going to postpone doing anything to the road regarding the drainage, we will have to spend more on maintenance every year. Town Administrator Cronin reminded Council that, according to our intergovernmental agreement, Charleston County would do minor repair work, under \$5,000, at no charge. With curb cuts going in at some point along the roadway, it was agreed that it might be wise to put off doing anything to the roadway for now and continue to do maintenance type work.
- Bike Path – Councilman Goldstein stated that drainage issues along the bike path need to be addressed because of liability issues. The Town still must get the final design from the contractor to determine what should be done to alleviate the flooding issue so that the cost of the project can be determined.
- Funding the Dolphin Education Program at the full amount

The Town Administrator asked if Council wanted the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee to stay within the projected 65% amount that is budgeted to come in during 2021 (approximately \$61,000) or make recommendations even if it means tapping into the fund balance. Council seemed to agree that the projected amount was what the Committee should consider. The Town Administrator stated that he would let the Committee know that one of Council's top priorities for 2021 is Beach Patrol. Councilwoman Fox stated that, due to the advertising the documentary about the strand feeding dolphins will give Seabrook Island, it will be important to fund, or at least partially fund, the Dolphin Education Program. The Town Administrator pointed out that there had recently been issues with individuals taunting the dolphins while no volunteers were present.

The Town Administrator also asked if Council had any interest in reviewing the Town's fee schedules, specifically plan review, permitting, etc., to see if enough money is being collected to cover the Town's costs. After considerable discussion, the Town Administrator said he will

proceed on the budget process assuming that fees will not change; and, if Council decides it is necessary, this issue can be revisited.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Date: August 25, 2020

*Faye Albritton*

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Town Clerk