



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Town Council

Meeting Minutes - Final

Mayor Jessica Anderson
Mayor pro tem Amy Ryan
Council Member Camille Berry
Council Member Melissa McCullough
Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee

Council Member Theodore Nollert
Council Member Adam Searing
Council Member Elizabeth Sharp
Council Member Karen Stegman

Friday, May 3, 2024

8:00 AM

RM 110 | Council Chamber

Language Access Statement

For interpretation or translation services, call 919-969-5105.

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Para servicios de interpretación o traducción, llame al 919-969-5105.

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In-Person Meeting Notification

View the Meeting

- View and participate in the Council Chamber.
- Live stream the meeting - <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>
- Spectrum is replacing 1998 encoder that transmits programming to cable channel 18. It remains offline until complete.
- The Town of Chapel Hill wants to know more about who participates in its programs and processes, including Town Council meetings.
- Participate in a voluntary demographic survey before viewing online or in person - <https://www.townofchapelhill.org/demosurvey>

Parking

- Parking is available at Town Hall lots and the lot at Stephens Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.
- See <http://www.parkonthehill.com> for other public lots on Rosemary Street
- Town Hall is served by NS route and T route, and GoTriangle Routes of Chapel Hill Transit.

Entry and Speakers

- Entrance on the ground floor.
- Please do not bring signs.

ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Mayor Jessica Anderson, Mayor pro tem Amy Ryan, Council Member Camille Berry, Council Member Paris Miller-Foushee, Council Member Adam Searing, Council Member Karen Stegman, Council Member Theodore Nollert, Council Member Melissa McCullough, and Council Member Elizabeth Sharp

OTHER ATTENDEES

Town Manager Chris Blue, Deputy Town Manager Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Deputy Town Manager Loryn Clark, Town Attorney Ann Anderson, Executive Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing Susan Brown, Business Management Director Amy Oland, Business Management Assistant Director Matthew Brinkley, Chief of Staff Jeanne Brown, Police Officer Jabe Shick, Governance Services Director/Town Clerk Sabrina Oliver, and Deputy Town Clerk Amy Harvey.

OPENING

Mayor Anderson called the work session to order at 8:00 a.m. Council Members Berry, Miller-Foushee and Searing were present. Council Members Nollert and McCullough arrived at 8:01 a.m. and Council Members Stegman and Sharp arriving at 8:04 a.m. and 8:10 a.m., respectively.

Mayor Anderson said that the work session's purpose was to discuss whether to bring a bond referendum before Chapel Hill voters in 2024. If the Council decided to go forward with a bond, then it would need to determine spending categories and amounts as well, she said. She pointed out that no formal Council vote would take place until a Regular Council Business Meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

AGENDA ITEM

1. Bond Referendum - Further Consideration & Discussion

[\[24-0254\]](#)

Town Manager Chris Blue summarized the Council's previous discussions regarding the bond and emphasized the need for a consensus on orders and amounts in order to put a referendum on the ballot in November 2024. He outlined a tight timeline that included setting ballot questions and a referendum date by June 17, 2024. The referendum, if passed, would include three separate issuances of approximately \$13.5 million in 2025, \$10-15 million in 2027, and \$10-15 million in 2029/2030, he said.

Mr. Blue reviewed staff's original April 15th recommendation, which had included the following: \$15 million for Public Safety Facilities, \$10 million

for Affordable Housing (AH), \$10 million for Streets and Sidewalks, \$4.5 million for Parks and Recreation, \$2.5 million for Public Facilities, \$2 million for Open Space and Greenways, and \$1.7 million for the Police Station Upfit. That proposed breakdown would address multiple needs across Town departments and advance many aspects of the Council's Complete Community strategy, he said.

Mr. Blue then presented a revised recommendation, which he had prepared in response to the Council's request, that proposed increasing AH to \$15 million by reducing the allocations for both Public Facilities and Streets and Sidewalks by \$2.5 million each. He discussed the tradeoffs that were the result of having limited resources but many capital needs.

In response to prior comments by some Council Members, Mr. Blue also presented a scenario that would allocate \$20 million for AH by reducing Streets and Sidewalks, Parks and Recreation, and Open Space/Greenways by \$1.5 million, \$1.5 million and \$2 million, respectively. He pointed out that such a scenario would commit nearly half of the total bond amount to one bond order. Those funds could not be reallocated to another order if they could not be spent, he said.

Mr. Blue explained that both revised scenarios would continue to defer many capital projects, such as Connectivity and Sustainability in particular. Staff was continuing to recommend \$15 million for AH, he said.

As the Council's discussion began, Council Members Ryan, Searing, McCullough and Sharp spoke in favor of \$15 million for AH. Council Members Berry and Miller-Foushee said they were committed to \$20 million, and Council Members Stegman and Nollert did not express a specific preference.

Mayor pro tem Ryan pointed out that the Manager had increased AH from \$10 million to \$15 million, and she commented on how the bond would address Town needs and broad community's interests. Council Member Stegman said \$15 million seemed like an improvement but that \$10 million had been far too low to begin with. She and Council Member Miller-Foushee said that AH was being scrutinized in a way that other categories were not.

Council Member Searing noted a proposed reduction in the Parks and Recreation category and cautioned against creating a two-tier system of recreation in Town. However, he did understand the Town's many competing priorities and could support \$15 million for AH, he said.

Council Member Berry asked several questions about Parks and Recreation projects, fire stations, and anticipated AH projects. She said that she would continue to advocate for \$20 million for AH because the Town had

several of those projects ready to go.

Council Member McCullough read a statement on her stance that said \$15 million should allow the Town to start all its projected AH projects through 2028. Additional sources of funds would come after that, she said, and she pointed out that Paths and Greenways and Transit projects addressed equity issues as well.

Council Member Sharp said that allocating \$15 million, rather than \$20 million, would not mean the Council was turning its back on those who need affordable housing. It was not a sufficient amount for AH, but there was not enough money for any of the categories, she said.

Council Member Nollert pointed out that the community wanted AH, connectivity and greenspace while the Council also needed to address issues such as roads and fire stations. He proposed allocating \$18.5 million to AH by taking funds from Parks and Recreation and Streets and Sidewalks. If there were not enough Council votes for that, though, he would vote for \$15 million, he said.

Council Member Miller-Foushee said that she would agree to \$18.5 million for AH even though she preferred \$20 million. She said that her intent was not to neglect other Town needs, values and priorities -- but that people were living in tents Chapel Hill's wooded areas.

Council Member Berry said she would consider \$18.5 million as well but was concerned about what might be cut to achieve that. Council Member Searing spoke against the \$18.5 million proposal because it would take money from Parks and Recreation, which he said had become "the piggy bank" for the last decade or so despite its many needs. Mayor pro tem Ryan also said that the \$18.5 proposal would mean a 70 percent cut in Parks and Recreation and that she was in favor of doing the repairs and retrofitting there that staff had recommended.

Some Council Members began to talk about deferring specific projects, but Mayor pro tem Ryan expressed concern that such a debate would delay the bond and Mayor Anderson nodded her head in agreement. Mr. Blue cautioned against "horse trading" at the current time and urged the Council to decide on the broad categories. He said that staff would return later with more information on project priorities.

With a show of hands, Mayor Anderson and Council Members Sharp, Ryan, Searing, McCollough indicated support for staff's \$15 million for AH recommendation. The Mayor thanked the Council for listening to staff and to each other and she thanked the staff for bringing several options. She expressed excitement over being able to move forward with more capacity to make Chapel Hill a more equitable, sustainable and green place to live.

The Mayor inquired about agreement on moving forward with the revised staff recommendations. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Mayor Anderson, Mayor pro tem Ryan, Council Member Searing, Council Member McCullough, and Council Member Sharp

Nay: 4 - Council Member Berry, Council Member Miller-Foushee, Council Member Stegman, and Council Member Nollert

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.