

**Dunn City Council**  
**Special Meeting – Budget Planning Retreat**  
 Friday, February 9, 2024  
 8:30 a.m., Lumina, Wrightsville Beach NC

## Minutes

**PRESENT:** Mayor William P. Elmore Jr., Mayor Pro Tem J. Wesley Sills, Council Members April Gauden, Raquel McNeil, Billy N. Tart, Alan Hargis, and Dr. David L. Bradham.

*Also present: City Manager Steven Neuschafer, Assistant City Manager Billy Godwin, Finance Director Cary McNallan, Chief of Police Cary Jackson, Planning Director George Adler, Parks and Recreation Director Brian McNeill, Human Resources Director Connie Jernigan, Public Works Director Dwayne Williams, Administrative Support Specialist Amber Groves, and City Clerk Tammy Williams.*

### **Session 1 – Getting Started**

Mayor Elmore opened the meeting at 8:30 a.m., gave the invocation and afterwards led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Elmore thanked everyone that was in attendance. He welcomed Robert Jordan with The Daily Record and new Council Members Hargis and McNeil. He discussed the advantages of this retreat – reviewing past goals and reevaluating and setting goals for the upcoming years. He then recognized City Manager Steven Neuschafer who introduced the Facilitator, Chad Sary.

Sary began the day by starting with Pre-Retreat Questions for Council and staff.

1) What is your expectation for retreat?

Responses included clear direction, common goals and actions steps, consensus building and road map with short and long-term goals.

2) What do you see as the most critical issues or trends facing the City?

Responses included growth and infrastructure, code enforcement, public relations, funding, losing institutional knowledge with upcoming retirements, gateway improvements and being “business friendly.”

3) What is one thing you believe the City could do to improve its performance?

Responses included Code enforcement, attracting better businesses and housing, public relations, employee training and retention, updating technology, growth training for board members, customer service, fill open staff positions, gateway improvements and internal communications.

Sary provided perspective on governing as a body and then led council in several questions:

1) What does a good government look like? Responses included being responsible to taxpayers, unity, addressing needs of residents, leadership, being an example and problem solving.

2) Values? Responses included doing what is right for the entire city not just one district, honesty, listening, transparency, connecting to community and integrity.

3) Handling the prevailing decision agree or not? Responses included own position but work as a team, disagree – agreeably, voice concern but accept decisions, be unified, what is best for the city mentality.

4) Relationship with Council? Responses included respect, teamwork, honesty, and open mindedness, friendly, trusting, and professional.

5) Relationship with staff? Responses included friendly, trusting, respectful, supportive, access with effective communication.

6) Hopes that Council will be known for. Responses included action oriented, proactive, pro-business, unified, planning and preparation for future, listening, problem solvers and the favorite, “Big Ideas in a Small Room.”

### **Session 2 - Reflecting**

#### **Manager’s Progress Report**

City Manager Neuschafer reviewed the goals and accomplishments from the last retreat and gave an update on the Imagine Dunn Strategic Vision Plan progress.

#### **Mid-Year Report and Financial Outlook**

Finance Director McNallan presented the Mid-Year Financial Report including update on debt schedule. Summary included that the General Fund balances and revenue streams remain strong. Water, Sewer, and Stormwater cash balances are weak depending on construction projects and grants which increases the need for Utility cash flow management. Expenditure budgets are keeping in pace with inflation, but revenues will not increase without new development, rate increases or a decrease in services to reduce expenditure. Infrastructure expenditures and debt issuance are necessary for future growth. Need to continue monitoring debt ratios and fund balances and continue to look for opportunities for grants and low interest loans.

#### **Human Resources**

Director Jernigan gave an update on major accomplishments which included Pay Study completion and certification incentive policy implemented. She updated on open positions and reviewed the number of employees with 22 plus years of employment and experience.

#### **Parks and Recreation**

Director McNeill reported on accomplishments which included 15.5% increase in program participation, adding community events, opening of Codrington Park, Lifeguard saving life and winning bid for 2025 DYB World Series. He reported on active projects and that he is seeking a grant for future park development. He also reported on the need to update cemetery software and the need for cemetery road improvements.



Police

Chief Jackson reported on accomplishments including the second CALEA accreditation, Citizens Academy, reinstating the Dunn Police Explorer Post, establishing multi-agency drug enforcement team and completion of Flock Safety LPR Project. She discussed retention plan, plans for a new K-9 unit, increased "in-house" training, Body Camera updates, community outreach and needed facility upgrades.

Finance

Director McNallan reported on accomplishments to include development of a formal budget book, conversion to bi-weekly payroll, completion of audit, physical inventory of city's vehicles and machinery, improved accounting procedures and staff training. Project in progress and planned include revisions to purchasing policy, additional Tyler software training, automated payroll time keeping system and vehicle replacement policy.

The meeting was recessed at 12:04 p.m. and reconvened at 12:47 p.m.

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION****Audit Presentation**

Austin Eubanks with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co P.A presented the Audit Report which is on file with the City Clerk.

Motion by Council Member Sills and second by Council Member Gaulden to accept the Audit Report as presented. **Motion unanimously approved.**

**Work Session Meetings**

City Clerk Williams informed the Council of the difference between Work Sessions and Regular Meetings. While no official business is usually conducted at a work session, these meetings are still open to the public and do not prohibit the governing body members from taking official action. Work sessions are intended to provide opportunities for Council members to study difficult issues, gather and analyze information and clarify problems.

After discussion, Mayor Elmore asked the Clerk to include the proposed new schedule with work sessions at the next council meeting.

Public Works

Director Williams reported on his department's accomplishments to include sidewalk installation for the Park-to-Park trail and the paintings for Bike Trail markers, sidewalk installation in various other areas, paving project, removing damaged and installing new curb and gutters, clearing blockages in stormwater ditches and pipes as well as replacing damaged pipes and paving in-house project. Also created bulk yard waste guideline and street sweeper/leaf truck route schedule that has been distributed as well as replacement of storm drain lids with lids made by PW employees and improvements on asphalt cut repairs. Goals include establishing a flagger training program within the department, developing a program for commercial driver's license course, continue improvements on stormwater flow, damaged sidewalks, concrete stormwater lids and cross training of employees.

Planning and Inspections

Planning Director Adler reported major accomplishments including adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance. He reported that since January 2020, the City had a net increase in housing of 247 with 82 of those being infill. Priorities include amending UDO, implementation of four projects in the ADA transition plan and upgrading permitting technology.

Public Utilities

City Manager Neuschafer reviewed the projects completed by the Public Utilities staff to include 1100 lf water line replacement on N King, 31 water and sewer taps, repaired 157 leaks, 25 offset manholes, 40 broken cleanouts, responded to 160 sewer blockages and completed 9,786 locate tickets. Plans are to implement Lead Copper project, Tracy Lane project, Champion Pump Station project, Love's force main cleaning along with new equipment and staff. He also updated on the Water Plant and Sewer Plant projects as well as the SOC.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Assistant City Manager Godwin gave updates on the Wayfinding Project, Park to Park Sidewalk Project and the I95 Widening Project. He discussed potential projects such as public works facility and fuel station relocation, municipal building upgrades, cotton gin and caboose property.

City Manager Neuschafer gave an update on various projects to include paving, stormwater, elevated water, and sewer SOC projects.

The meeting was recessed at 4:35 p.m.

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**Special Meeting – Budget Planning Retreat**  
**Saturday, February 10, 2024**  
**8:30 a.m., Lumina, Wrightsville Beach NC**

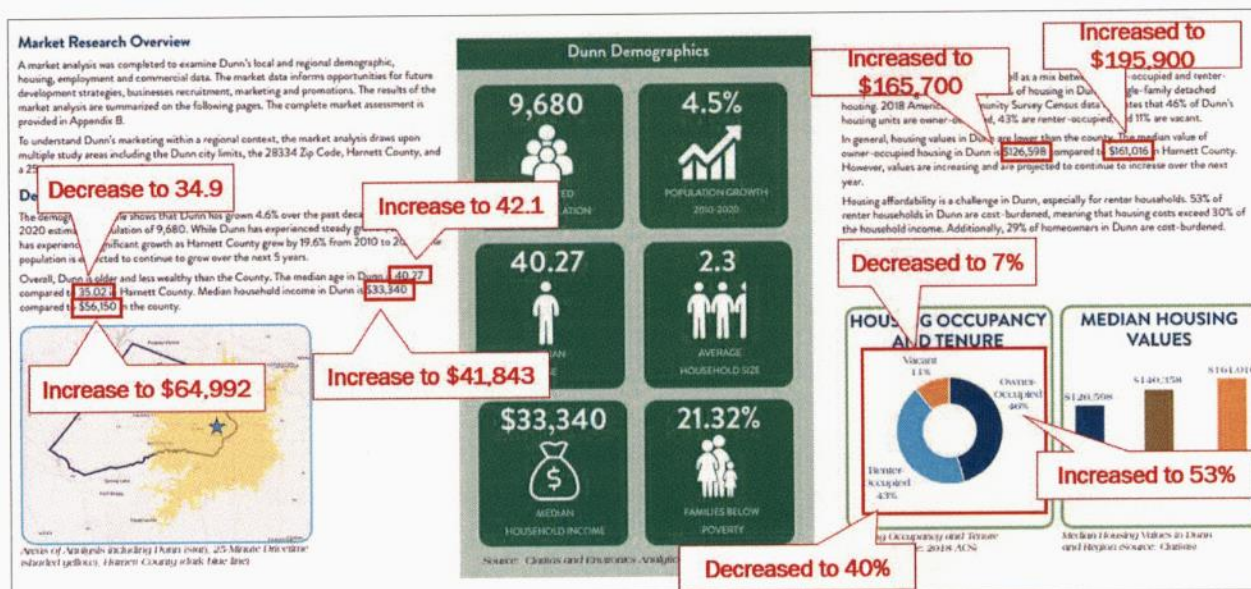
Mayor Elmore reconvened the meeting on Saturday, February 10, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. and then gave the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Session 2 – Reflecting**

Sary provided a recap and presented an Environmental and Demographic Scan Update which was previously provided in the Imagine Dunn Plan.

**Session 3 – Reviewing Priorities**

Sary reviewed the goals and priorities of the previous year and went through a consensus exercise to delete the goals that are complete or no longer a priority to keep the ones that remain a priority for council. He also asked Council to share one of their own short-term and long-term goals. The following graphic highlights the changes from 2020 to 2023:



**Session 2 – True Today – True in Five Years**

Facilitator Sary provided an overview of the True Today – True in Five Years exercise that was conducted at the previous year's retreat. The City Council agreed that these items are still relevant and unchanged. The following graphic highlights this exercise:

**True Today – True in 5 Years:**

**What is TRUE about Dunn TODAY that you still hope will be true in 5 years?**

- Council in tune with residents
- Maintain a small-town feel but accept growth
- A sense of community
- Embracing growth
- A low crime rate

**What is NOT TRUE about Dunn TODAY that you hope will be true in 5 years?**

- Infrastructure issues resolved
- A better job market
- More dining options in downtown
- An established "niche" for Dunn for marketing purposes
- Growth to occur – move past being stagnant
- Clear direction for land use & growth decisions
- Better connectivity throughout the city

**Session 3 – Reviewing Priorities: Keep, Toss, Complete Exercise**

Facilitator Sary reviewed the goals and priorities from the previous year's retreat, and Council agreed by consensus to delete the goals that were complete or no longer a priority and to keep the ones that remain as a short term and long-term goal.

**Session 3 - Individual Short-Term & Long-Term Goals**

Before taking a mid-morning break, each elected official provided Facilitator Sary with one individual short-term & one long-term goal. The results are as follows:



Short Term Individual Goal	Long-Term Individual Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stormwater mitigation</li> <li>• New Public Works Building</li> <li>• Road repairs (in-house)</li> <li>• Bring a high-quality restaurant to downtown</li> <li>• Street paving projects complete</li> <li>• The second phase of street paving complete</li> <li>• Hold an annual Juneteenth Event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water &amp; Sewer Issues resolved</li> <li>• Water plant complete (3 votes)</li> <li>• Stormwater issues resolved</li> <li>• Complete wastewater treatment plant upgrades</li> <li>• Community Beautification</li> </ul>

Sary then led the Council in an exercise to establish the Short Term and Long-Term Goals.

FY 2024-25 Short Term Goals					
Priority Rank (Points Received)	Votes (for each color)			Goal & Action Steps	Imagine Dunn Theme
1 (21)	7			<b>Continued funding for infrastructure improvements.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Repairs and new lines should be sized to accommodate growth.</li> <li>➤ Investments in stormwater control improvements (annual funding, clear annual priorities, consider fee increase, better development regulations)</li> <li>➤ Create an action plan to address water plant issues.</li> <li>➤ Implement street repair improvements (prioritize issues &amp; allocate funding).</li> </ul>	Planning for Growth
2 (13)	1	4	2	<b>Improve public relations.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop communications training for applicable employees.</li> <li>➤ Research a PIO position – evaluate if full-time/part-time or use of a consultant is applicable.</li> <li>➤ Create a progress report for the City Council on monthly activities.</li> <li>➤ Develop and install signage for active projects while they are occurring in the City to inform the public about city project activities while they are happening.</li> </ul>	Community Character
3 (9)	3			<b>Complete renovations to City Hall.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Construct a female locker room (police).</li> <li>➤ Repair plumbing problems.</li> </ul>	Planning for Growth
4 (8)		3	2	<b>Update UDO to address typos and land use plan recommendations.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Create text amendments to correct typos and implement newer growth recommendations in the land use plan.</li> <li>➤ Use newly established City Council work sessions to focus on land use and growth issues.</li> </ul>	Planning for Growth
4 (8)		4		<b>Develop a regional marketing plan for sports events.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with local businesses to promote Dunn to host sporting events.</li> <li>➤ Parks &amp; Recreation to reach out to baseball organizations to find out the needs to be able to host future events in Dunn.</li> <li>➤ Reached out to regional sporting organizations to market Dunn and find out how the city can host major events in future.</li> </ul>	Market Positioning
5 (7)	2	1		<b>Business Recruitment &amp; Investments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Form a committee to recruit businesses downtown.</li> <li>➤ In conjunction with the City’s tourism group, provide advanced notices to local businesses when major events occur in Dunn to ensure they</li> </ul>	Business Development



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are open and ready for the influx of visitors.</li> <li>➤ Refine the food truck ordinance to address noise issues.</li> </ul>	
6 (6)	2			<b>Continue to fund &amp; implement gateway improvements and City signage program.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Put improvements out for bid to construct.</li> <li>➤ Look to add additional signage through NCDOT.</li> <li>➤ Increase code enforcement efforts along gateways.</li> </ul>	Community Character
6 (6)	1	1	1	<b>Continue to upgrade City technology.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Update payroll &amp; permitting software.</li> <li>➤ Prepare a plan for physical/hardware upgrades.</li> <li>➤ Evaluate vendor for water bill payment (the existing process is not user-friendly).</li> </ul>	Planning for Growth
6 (6)		2	2	<b>Reuse of City-owned properties</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Start a program to identify issues and create an action plan with priorities.</li> <li>➤ Document activities regularly with the City Council.</li> </ul>	Community Character
7 (5)		1	3	<b>Actively recruit more retail businesses.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tour new businesses and market the city.</li> <li>➤ Participate with chamber of commerce on business recruitment.</li> <li>➤ Stay involved and monitor recruitment and tourism activities.</li> </ul>	Partnerships
8 (4)		2		<b>Private Property Utility Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Finish the ordinance and adopt it.</li> <li>➤ Create &amp; fund incentive programs for private sector investments, specifically for restaurants (façade grants, permit fee reductions, etc.)</li> </ul>	Community Character
9 (3)	1			<b>Continue City Beautification Efforts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Look for funding sources and develop a plan.</li> <li>➤ Seek community involvement &amp; business participation.</li> <li>➤ Look at public art program and partner with local schools in these efforts.</li> </ul>	Quality of Life
9 (3)	1			<b>Provide alternatives for senior citizen transportation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Research grant for funding to support efforts.</li> </ul>	Quality of Life
10 (2)		1		<b>Fund improvement efforts that provide connectivity to existing parks, sidewalks, greenways, etc.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identify Phase 2</li> <li>➤ Get cost estimates and begin to budget.</li> <li>➤ Identify easy and less expensive projects that can be handled in-house.</li> </ul>	Quality of Life
11 (1)			1	<b>Develop a Juneteenth Celebration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coordinate with other organizations (downtown, chamber, etc.)</li> <li>➤ Provide support with public property usage.</li> <li>➤ Provide support with safety (police) during event.</li> </ul>	Market Positioning
12				<b>Construct New Water Tower</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Confirm funding and research additional funding to construct.</li> <li>➤ Solicit designers and put out for bid.</li> </ul>	Planning for Growth

FY 2024-25 Long Term Goals			
Priority Rank	Votes	Goal & Action Steps	Imagine Dunn Theme
1 (t)	5	<b>Support workforce development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support new workforce building renovations with community college.</li> <li>➤ Be financially supportive of the I-95 Alliance and actively recruit more members.</li> <li>➤ Expand utilities to support growth.</li> </ul>	Partnerships
1 (t)	5	<b>Codrington Park Improvements</b>	Quality of Life



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Install fence around cemetery and provide overall improvements and repairs.</li> <li>➤ Install lighting in the parking area and cemetery.</li> <li>➤ Complete parks &amp; recreation needs survey.</li> </ul>	
2	3	<b>Stay involved with the I-95 Alliance and recruit new members.</b>	Market Positioning
3 (t)	2	<b>Complete Water Plant Upgrades</b>	Planning for Growth
3 (t)	2	<b>Construct new Public Works/Public Utilities Complex.</b>	Planning for Growth
3 (t)	2	<b>Continue efforts to reuse City-owned and private properties that are underutilized.</b>	Community Character
4	1	<b>Create Redevelopment Zone</b>	Community Character
	0	<b>Foster relationships with high schools by creating an apprenticeship program with the City.</b>	Partnerships
	0	<b>Relocate the tourism office closer to gateways.</b>	Partnerships
	0	<b>Complete Downtown Master Plan.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Organizations.</li> </ul>	Partnerships
	0	<b>Focuses on employee retention &amp; recruitment.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a clear process for career advancement across all departments.</li> </ul>	Quality of Life
	0	<b>Continue efforts to improve City's brand.</b>	Market Positioning
	0	<b>Foster relationship with high school by creating an apprenticeship program with the City.</b>	Partnerships
	0	<b>Continue efforts to improve gateways and wayfinding.</b>	Community Character
	0	<b>Continue Stormwater Improvements efforts.</b>	Planning for Growth

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m. with no objections.



*William P. Elmore Jr.*  
 William P. Elmore Jr.  
 Mayor

Attest:

*Tammy Williams*  
 Tammy Williams, CMC, NCCMC  
 City Clerk