

CITY OF MONROE
CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
300 WEST CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
OCTOBER 6, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.
AGENDA
www.monroenc.org

This Meeting will be conducted virtually with City Council following their adopted Electronic Meeting Rules. The Meetings will, also be live-streamed on the City of Monroe YouTube channel at Monroe North Carolina Government -

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzrGKOKR72fmCEn7D0f9mlg?>

1. Health Plan Trends, Reconsideration of Personnel Requests for Fiscal Year Ending 2021 and Fiscal Update
2. Open Conversation on Racism Committee Update
3. City Lake Information

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- **Agenda** is tentative and is subject to change up to and including the time of the meeting.
 - At the discretion of City Council, **Agenda Items** listed above that are not discussed at the Strategic Planning Meeting or moved at the request of Council, may be carried forward to the City Council Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. to be considered.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

DATE: October 6, 2020

FROM: E.L. Faison, City Manager

SUBJECT: Health Plan Trends, Reconsideration of Personnel Requests and Fiscal Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

City Council will receive multiple presentations describing the trends affecting the City's Health Plan, summary of Department Personnel Requests made for Fiscal Year Ending 2021, and a Fiscal Update.

REVIEW

City Council will receive three presentations that will describe the trends affecting the City's Health Plan from Mark III, a summary of Department Personnel Requests from Debra Reed that were considered by the City Manager for Fiscal Year Ending 2021, and Fiscal Update detailing favorable trends for sales tax and property tax receipts from Lisa Strickland.

The material being presented at this session regarding the City's Health Plan approaches the midpoint of the fiscal year as a snapshot for claims/losses being experienced in the City's Health Plan. A number of strategies to mitigate those circumstances have been formulated and will be explained during this session. The Plan Design, which describes premiums, benefits, and employer ~ employee costs will be formulated and presented on a subsequent date after we have fully employed these strategies and determine how well they mitigate the trends.

The second presentation will offer a historical perspective of personnel authorizations and a summary of Department Personnel Requests made for Fiscal Year Ending 2021. Both of the first two presentations, *Health Plan and Personnel Authorizations & Requests*, will help set the foundation for understanding the fiscal situation we face, the fiscal options City Council may consider and the recommended course of action offered by the City Manager.

The Fiscal Update will underscore the significant favorability in cash flows we are anticipating today. Although we are cautiously optimistic that this revenue favorability will continue, the cash flows remain fragile. The extent this favorability was produced by the two federal stimulus packages is unknown, but accepted as a major contributing factor towards having a viable regional

economy. Consequently, the sales tax trend for our 3rd and 4th quarters could change dramatically from the current view. Thus, the recommendation that will be described authorizing additional personnel positions should take affect no earlier than January 1st. This allows the management team to proceed cautiously and possibly delay hiring's if there is a weakening of the local economy as measured through sales tax receipts. The remainder of the recommendation largely involves assigning resources to other Funds or Programs such offsetting a portion of the future renewal cost of the Health Plan, or assigning funds for the Concord Avenue Redevelopment Plan. Those actions don't have the immediate effect of an expenditure, and thus should afford the City Council a greater degree of confidence in navigating the economic waters of the 3rd and 4th quarters.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council accept the presentations on the City's Health Plan, and Department Personnel Requests for information purposes and accept the City Manager's recommendation for the use and appropriation of funds derived from favorable trends in sales taxes and property taxes receipts by adopting a Capital Project Budget Ordinance and Budget Amendment.

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and City Council

VIA: E.L. Faison, City Manager

DATE: October 6, 2020

FROM: Debra Chestnut Reed, Director of Human Resources

PREPARED BY: Debra Chestnut Reed, Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: Open Conversation on Racism Committee

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Committee Chair will provide Council with an update on the Open Conversation on Racism Committee.

REVIEW

City Councilwomen Surluta Anthony, Chairperson, will provide Council with an update on the Open Conversation on Racism Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

For informational purposes only, no action needed.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: E.L. Faison, City Manager

DATE: October 6, 2020

FROM: Russell Colbath, Water Resources Director

SUBJECT: City Lake Information, Possible Recreation Facility Expansion

SUMMARY STATEMENT

City Council is requested to receive information regarding City lake regulations, requirements, programs, and operations. Further, to provide direction regarding if expanded recreational facilities, uses, and access is desirable on City water supply lakes.

REVIEW

Water Resources Department Staff from time to time receives questions from citizens and elected officials regarding the operations of the City lakes, Lake Twitty, Lee, and Monroe. The most recent inquiry was from Councilman McGee via a citizen inquiry about docks and ramps, recreation amenities, and seasonal lake closures. This staff report provides an overview of the factors and considerations used to formulate current City lake management strategies, and how that might shape expanded recreational use. This topic was presented at the September Public Enterprise Committee meeting, and is coming to Council without a specific recommendation.

Regulatory Requirements and Considerations:

- NC 15A 18C.1200 - Protection of Filtered Water Supplies
 - Mandates supervision and policing of all recreation activities on Class I (Twitty) and Class II (Lee and Monroe) water supply reservoirs.
 - Regulates access rules and fishing/boating. Requires supervision of boats at all times and mandates all motorized boats enter and leave by City controlled ramp.
 - Prohibits human contact (swimming), domestic animal use of lakes, etc.
 - Focus is water quality and public health protection.
- Chapter 54 - City Lake Ordinance – Generally incorporates NCDEQ requirements.
 - Seasonal access (March to November) by permit at inspector boathouse.
 - Lake front properties – seasonal access by User Agreement and fee payment. These properties follow same rules as general public.

- Limits boat length and motor size (20 HP). Highest risks to water supply are a gasoline fuel spill and noxious vegetation imported on a motor propeller.
- No wading, swimming, hunting, etc.
- Focus is water quality protection for drinking water supply.
- Clean Water Act Section 303d, Impaired Water List. All three City lakes are on this list. Impairment is generally driven by nutrient pollution (nitrogen and phosphorous), and the poor water quality in the City lakes creates added treatment costs, drinking water taste and odor challenges, and possible regulatory compliance issues. Impairment listing may create significant future mandates for stormwater pollution, TMDL and/or development restrictions in watersheds.
- Vegetation Buffer Regulations – These are contained in State, City, and County statutes and ordinances. City’s Buffer Policy adopted in 2012 incorporates regulatory requirements and is designed to protect water quality and the aesthetic beauty of the lake shorelines.

Lake Inspector Staffing and Seasonal Operations:

- Lake Inspectors are contract employees paid via the City payroll system.
- Contracts are configured to meet legal requirements and protect water quality at lowest reasonable cost to rate payers. Inspectors receive monthly base pay of \$600 and retain visitor fees collected for fishing or boating via a permit accounting system. They are allowed to sell concessions to increase revenue.
- Each inspector must maintain one Assistant Inspector for lake coverage when inspector is absent and provide their own patrol boat.
- Open season is March 1st to November 1st each year, five (5) days per week, 7am to 7 pm.
- They receive no benefits or overtime just Workman’s Compensation coverage.
- Lake inspectors are supervised by the water treatment plant superintendent. This has become difficult due to the responsibilities of managing the WTP operations and regulatory compliance, but helps keep costs low.
- Total annual cost to City for all inspectors at three lakes is approximately \$21,600. Fees collected by inspectors are audited then paid back to them.
- Staffing year-round to keep lake recreation access open has been periodically reviewed, but found to be problematic and costly (full time salaries and benefits, overtime, added fourth staff person for coverage, City vehicle and boat, other). Current inspectors are not interested in working year-round.

Current Recreational Uses, Amenities, and Efforts: Given the significant technical and regulatory challenges associated with managing the City’s water supply (and lakes), recreational expansion has not been the primary focus. That being said, WR staff has done a good job providing citizen opportunity for seasonal access, boating, fishing, bird watching, kayaking, etc., while successfully balancing these uses with water supply requirements.

Currently, City lakes offer the following:

- All City lakes have a new floating dock installed in 2017 at a cost of over \$75,000.
- Launching access at Lake Lee and Monroe is by paved ramp. Due to size limits on boats, only a small ramp is needed. Lake Twitty has two (2) gravel/rock launch areas to accommodate high/low water levels. Both ramps seem to work fine for the size boats being launched.
- Lake front properties have access by user's agreement and seasonal access permits.
- Bank fishing is limited to the areas around the City inspector boat houses due to limited land ownership.
- Picnic tables are provided at Lake Twitty and Monroe, but there seems to be very little interest in use. We do not have cooking grills at any City lakes.
- Some tree plantings have occurred to beautify the shoreline and City property.
- Public educational efforts have included direct mailings to all lake front properties and communications to UC Realtor Association.
- Materials posted on City website include a Frequently Asked Questions handout format.
- Water Resources inspector staff are primarily focused on water quality protection but also play a big public relations role.

Opportunities for Expanded Recreational Use - During the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan update process, potential greenway trail opportunities around the lakes were discussed. Due to the inconsistency in the width of City owned property along the shoreline, and potential resistance from property owners, further exploration for greenway trails in this area was not pursued. Other recreational amenities at boat launch areas were briefly discussed but in the final analysis, no City lake recreational facilities were included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

If City Council desired a focused analysis/study on how recreational facilities and opportunities can be expanded at the City lakes, an RFP process directed to engineering consulting firms specializing in lakes and parks/recreation development will be needed. An RFP might include the following elements and would likely cost in the \$75k – \$100k range:

- Analyze all City owned land around the City lakes for potential recreation facility expansion.
 - Provide high level schematics of potential facility layouts with associated cost estimates. Facilities would include, but not be limited to, picnic shelters, grills, expanded parking, improved restrooms with associated access to public sewer or septic system development, fishing platforms, dedicated kayak launching ramps, nature trails/greenways, etc.
 - Analyze all non-city owned land around the City lakes for potential recreation facility expansion including the above uses, but adding possible camping, lake access, nature trails/greenways, etc. High level cost estimates for land acquisition and improvements would be developed.
 - Study expansion of lake access by increasing the times the lakes are open from seasonal (March to November), to year-round.
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- Study staffing requirements and costs to properly supervise, manage, and maintain the lake facilities and operations, and any new or expanded facilities. Include costs for support equipment (vehicles, boats, tools, etc.).
- Study improvements in fee collections to include self service fee stations.
- Examine opportunities for nature and recreation programs.
- Ensure all expanded recreations facilities can be developed and implemented while complying with all water supply regulations, and watershed/water quality protection requirements.
- Develop funding strategies for proposed facilities and associated staffing needs, including grant programs, General Fund contributions, and/or water utility rate increases that would be needed to support expanded lake recreation.

Should City Council desired to study expanded recreation on City lakes, and direct staff to pursue the RFP process, staff would work to have proposals in hand by early 2021 and bring them back to Council for review, and to provide a consultant recommendation and funding/budget amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council is requested to receive information regarding current lake regulations, requirements, programs, and operations and provide direction to staff regarding if expanded recreational facilities, uses, and access is desirable on City water supply lakes. Further, to provide direction to staff on whether to pursue an RFP to study this topic.