



The Brevard City Council held its regular meeting on May 1, 2023. Mayor Maureen Copelof proclaimed May 15, 2023, Peace Officer's Memorial Day; May 14-20, 2023, National Police Week; May 2023 National Bike Month; and May 4, 2023, a Day of Prayer.

HR Director Kelley Craig presented proposed personnel policy revisions to Council. Elective changes included the addition of Juneteenth to the list of approved City holidays, the institution of paid parental leave, and the removal of the personnel board. Other policy recommendations involved language clarifications for the City's pay plan, administrative leave, internal application process, employment of relatives, and inclement weather and emergency closings. The recommendations also included updated overtime pay provisions, the addition of 2 days of leave for employees in their first 2 years of work, and pro-rated leave accrual for employees who work more than 40 hours/week.

David Hill, a management analyst with the Piedmont Triad Regional Council of Governments, provided an overview of the classification and compensation study completed in March 2023. After interviewing department directors and employees and conducting a comparative analysis with other nearby municipalities, Mr. Hill made the following recommendations:

- Adopt the proposed pay plan, which adjusts all pay grades upward 3.5% to better compete with other nearby local governments, and give all employees a corresponding pay increase that keeps them at their same relative position in the revised pay range as they are in the current range.
- Reassign some job classifications to new pay grades that better reflect their level of responsibility and give employees in those classifications a corresponding pay adjustment.

The total implementation cost associated with the compensation and classification study is \$346,627. If adopted, these changes will help the City better compete with other nearby local government agencies for talent.

City Manager Wilson Hooper then delivered a summary of the proposed budget for FY23/24. Mr. Hooper reviewed the top strategic priorities identified by Council at their March planning retreat, emphasizing their 3 essential priorities: housing policy action, personnel compensation, and wastewater treatment plant upgrades. (The Downtown Master Plan and the Estatoe Trail/Multi-Use Plan were also identified as high priorities.)

The recommendation's highlights include the following:

- “Two pennies for housing”: The recommended budget dedicates \$.02 of the proposed \$.48 millage rate—approximately \$264,000—to the creation and maintenance of affordable housing in the City of Brevard.

- Fully funds the recommendations of the recently concluded “Classification and Compensation Study,” which keeps employee compensation competitive with other area local governments with whom the City competes for employees, and offers a 5% Cost of Living Adjustment to all employees.
- Sets aside \$150,000 for professional services related to the preliminary design and engineering needed for Brevard’s wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) upgrade/replacement.
- Continues to endow capital funds dedicated to downtown improvements and the Estatoe Trail, though to a lesser degree than previous years.

The new spending is funded by a combination of modest natural growth in the City’s 3 main revenue sources (property tax, sales tax, and interest income), a proposed \$.03 increase in the City’s property tax rate, and the continuation of Brevard’s planned 4% yearly increases on its utility rates.

Collectively, these increases fully fund Council’s essential priorities, continue funding other priorities, maintain or enhance existing service levels, and jump-start long-term capital projects.

At Mr. Hooper’s request, Council set the public hearing session for the proposed budget for May 15, 2023. This public hearing session will serve as the venue for public feedback on the budget.

The recommended budget can be accessed online [here](#) or in hard copy at the Transylvania County Library and in the lobby of City Hall.

During the consent and information period, Council heard from Emily Lowery, the Executive Director of the Haven, who described the current shortage of outreach workers in the area and encouraged people to contact VAYA Health to advocated for additional mental health resources in the area. Council then adopted the proposed amendments to Chapter 42 of the Brevard Code of Ordinances regarding encampments.

Senior Planner Emily Brewer reviewed proposed Land Use Matrix Revisions to the Brevard Unified Development Ordinance concerning live-work units in Chapters 2, 3, and 19. Council also approved the adoption of those text amendments.

Finally, Assistant Planning Director Aaron Bland outlined a rezoning request for Osborne Road, which was originally made in 2021, prior to the completion and adoption of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Council then passed a motion to send the rezoning recommendation back to Planning for final review prior to a vote.

During closing remarks, Councilman Aaron Baker noted Public Works’ progress on the Tannery South portion of the Estatoe Trail, and City Manager Wilson Hooper recognized Chief Tom Jordan and Sgt. Clint Bolin (of BPD) and Jason Rowland (of BFD) for completing a course in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training led by Blue Ridge Community College, VAYA Health, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

The Council’s next regular meeting will be held on Monday, May 15, 2023.