

SUMMER 2024

The Bridge

Keeping you Connected

Town of Elizabethtown

Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2



Greetings to you all from the Town of Elizabethtown

Summer is almost here and I know you are as happy as I am to be able to be outside enjoying the warm weather. Our town has been showing off its beauty for the past two months with all the azaleas and dogwoods blooming and our downtown has never been more beautiful.

With summer approaching, we will be host to the White Lake visitors and the great economic boom it brings to our town! It has a great impact on our restaurants and downtown merchants, and we are very thankful for that.

Our Community Center Advisory Board met in February and again in May to begin work on the plans for its future. It is going to be a huge asset to our community, and you will see things going vertical very soon. Plans are moving along with the beginning of our Live, Work and Play community and the homes that will be built. This is an exciting venture and will make available much needed homes for our citizens and those wishing to make Elizabethtown their home. This has not been possible in the past and we are excited about the economic impact it will have on our town and our county.

Our Chief of Police, Tony Parrish, will be leaving us the end of June. We are happy to announce Mark McMichael as our new Chief of Police. Mark has been with the Town of Elizabethtown for 20 years and he will do a great job keeping our town safe! Congratulations, Mark!

WISHING YOU A GREAT SUMMER, AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

Sylvia Campbell, Mayor



A ribbon cutting for the EV Station at the Farmers Market was held on March 11.



From A. Smith on Facebook:
Thanks for putting in the EV charger ...Ate at Melvin's, checked out shops including Leinwand's, chatted up Ricky, and then got some goodies at Burney's!

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FROM THE TOWN MANAGER'S DESK:

As we approach the annual budget planning cycle for the upcoming fiscal year (1 July – 30 June), I wanted to take a moment to address some important aspects of our town's financial situation.

This year poses unique challenges as we grapple with costs that have surpassed revenues, a trend that has persisted for several years. Despite our efforts to streamline processes, cut spending, reduce staff, and leverage technology to maintain our service levels, we find ourselves facing a budget shortfall that necessitates adjusting property taxes after not doing so for 27 years. Our budgeting process adheres strictly to North Carolina General Statutes and the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, ensuring that all funds are balanced, and that revenues and expenditures are meticulously identified and approved by the council.

I'd like to address some common questions that arise regarding the proposed tax increase:

1. How much more will I have to pay?: The recommended General Fund budget for FY 2024-2025 includes a modest increase in the tax rate to \$0.645 per \$100 of valuation, equating to a \$0.03 cent increase per \$100 of valuation. For example, if your home has an assessed value of \$100,000, this would translate to an additional \$2.50 per month or \$30 annually.

2. Why can't we use the money you are spending for all these new projects at the Airport and Industrial Park?: Many have inquired about the numerous projects underway in our town, including developments at the industrial park, New Town, and the airport. It's important to note that the majority of these projects are funded through grants or earmarks, totaling over \$50 million. These funds are specifically allocated for their respective projects and cannot be redirected. Moreover, these initiatives are poised to expand our tax revenue base, mitigating our budget shortfall in the long term.

3. Why are you raising water and sewer rates as well?: The increase in property taxes is not the sole adjustment being made. We are also adjusting rates on water and sewer services which is a restricted fund and cannot be used for other town services. These adjustments are guided by the UNC School of Government rate study, which factors in inflation and the costs associated with maintaining our water and sewer systems. It's worth noting that our system remains robust, and we are currently upgrading our wastewater treatment plant using earmarked funds totaling \$13.6 million, without passing on additional costs to our customers.

Looking ahead, our focus remains on bolstering our town's fiscal health and eventually lowering taxes. To achieve this, we are committed to two key initiatives: the development of the Live Work Play campus in our industrial park and the establishment of a corporate airpark at our airport. These projects are projected to significantly increase our tax base, foster job creation in advanced manufacturing, and address the housing shortage in our county. Construction on both projects is slated to commence this summer. While the decision to adjust property taxes may pose short-term challenges, it is a necessary step to ensure the continued prosperity and growth of our town. Your understanding and support are invaluable as we navigate these fiscal realities together.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June

17-20 - ACE Aviation Camp, Curtis Brown Airfield
19 - Juneteenth, Town Offices closed.
28—July 7 - Downtown Sidewalk Sales

July

1 - Town Council Meeting
4 - Fourth of July, Town Offices Closed.

August

5 - Town Council Meeting
30 - Sept. 2—Downtown Labor Day Sales

September

2—Labor Day, Town Offices Closed
8 - Town Council Meeting

Disc Golf Group Meets Every Tuesday



A group of disc golf enthusiasts has been meeting every Tuesday night at Tory Hole Park to have a mini competition. There is a nominal cost to participate.

The 9-disc golf course at Tory Hole is open every day dawn to dusk. Bring your own discs and walk the scenic trail.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR UTILITY BILL DUE DATES

Your consumption or use of water, sewer and trash is measured from the 1st to the end of the month.

A bill for that consumption is processed and mailed to you during the 2nd week of the following month.

Your payment is due on the 5th of the month following your receipt of that bill. If the bill is not paid by the 5th of that month at 5pm, an automatic \$30 late fee is added.

Payment including the \$30 late fee is due by the 19th of that month. If not paid, the account and services will be disconnected. A \$100 fee is added to the account.

To reconnect at this point, all money due must be paid in full. This includes total balance, late fee, disconnect/reconnect fee, and the current month's bill.

EXAMPLE:

Jan. 1 – 31: Period of use

Feb. 4-14 - Bills sent out

March 5 – Payment is due. If not received \$30 added to the bill.

March 19 – No payment received. Account disconnected. Automatic \$100 fee for disconnect/reconnect.

For information, see www.elizabethtownnc.org



SAYING GOODBYE TO TWO OF OUR FINEST

On June 30, two of our law enforcement family will retire leaving big shoes to fill.

Chief of Police, Anthony “Tony” Parrish, has served 35 years as a law enforcement officer and has been with the Town of Elizabethtown’s Police Department since April 2016. Chief Parrish began his law enforcement career as a patrol officer in 1988 with the City of Greenville. In 1990, he joined the North Carolina Highway Patrol where he retired as first sergeant, before becoming the Chief of Police in Elizabethtown in 2016.



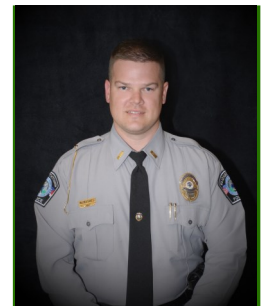
Lieutenant Dewayne Cheshire has been with the Elizabethtown Police Department for 29 years, working his way up the ranks from Patrol Division to the supervisor of the Criminal Investigations Division. Lieutenant Cheshire completed his Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) at Bladen Community College and was hired by the Elizabethtown Police Department as a full-time officer in August 1995. He joined the Criminal Investigations Division in March 2001 as a Detective Sergeant and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in November 2003.

“We are going to miss both officers,” Town Manager Dane Rideout said. “Our Police Department has grown greatly under their leadership.”

WELCOMING OUR NEW CHIEF OF POLICE

Lieutenant Mark McMichael, currently the Elizabethtown Police Department’s Patrol Commander, has been appointed the new Chief of Police, effective June 28, 2024.

“We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mark McMichael as the new Chief of Police for our town,” Town Manager Dane Rideout said in a press statement, adding “After a thorough selection process, Mark clearly emerged as the candidate best suited to lead our police force, ensuring safety, trust, and community engagement.”



“Please join us in welcoming Mark McMichael to his new role as Chief of Police. We are confident that under his guidance, the Elizabethtown Police Department will continue to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and service to our Town and citizens,” Rideout added.

McMichael has been with the Elizabethtown Police Force since 2003, first as a Patrolman, then Criminal Investigator and recently Patrol Commander. In 2023, McMichael was named Employee of the Year.

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SMITHFIELD CUP BBQ FESTIVAL

**SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 13, 2024**
Cape Fear Winery & Distillery



The inaugural Smithfield Cup, held in historic Elizabethtown N.C., celebrates that barbecue was founded and flavored in the Carolinas, featuring pork prepared from renowned Pitmasters from North Carolina and South Carolina.

www.thesmithfieldcup.com
Information on sponsorships and tickets sales

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