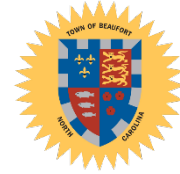




**Town of Beaufort
2024 Board of Commissioners Retreat**



**Beaufort Hotel
January 30-31, 2024
*Minutes***

Present:

Mayor Sharon Harker
Mayor Pro Tem Melvin Cooper
Commissioner Paula Gillikin
Commissioner John LoPiccolo
Commissioner Bucky Oliver
Commissioner Sarah Spiegler

Todd Clark, Town Manager
Paul Burdette, Police Chief
Barbara Cooper, HR Manager
Mark Eakes, Public Works Director
Kyle Garner, Planning & Inspections Director
Rachel Johnson, Parks & Events Coordinator/PIO
Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk
Greg Meshaw, Town Engineer
Tony Ray, Fire Chief
Donovan Willis, Public Utilities Director
Christi Wood, Finance Director

Fountainworks Staff: Warren Miller and Rachel Werz

Day 1- January 30, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Mayor Harker and Todd Clark provided a welcome to the group. Fountainworks staff provided a brief overview of the agenda and facilitated an icebreaker and problem solving activity. Board members had the opportunity to speak with each department head and certain staff members provided updates on the state of the Town. Samantha Darlington with the North Carolina Rural Planning Program spoke to the group about the Main Street Program and the process necessary to become part of the program. Fountainwork staff helped facilitate the Board with envisioning the future of Beaufort. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Day 2- January 31, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

Mayor Harker noted that Commissioner Gillikin was unable to join due to a sudden illness; she was excused from the meeting.

The Board of Commissioners and Town Staff reflected on day one of the Retreat. The group worked to refine goals and identify priorities. Several guest speakers addressed the group: Tracy Mancini, President of Carteret Community College; Perry Harker, Vice President of Carteret Community College; Kyle Marek, President of Carteret Healthcare; Erin Wynia and Abbie Britt with the North Carolina League of Municipalities. The group welcomed Senator Norm Sanderson and representative Celeste Cairns. They worked to build relationships with these important leaders of North Carolina by discussing many issues going on throughout the State and expressing specific needs within Beaufort and Carteret County. Fountainworks provided a recap of the retreat to end the day. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

A detailed report of the 2024 Board of Commissioners Retreat was composed by event facilitators, Fountainworks, and is attached as part of the official meeting minutes.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk



TOWN of
BEAUFORT
NORTH CAROLINA

Beaufort Board of Commissioners Retreat Summary

JANUARY 30-31, 2024

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TOWN OF BEAUFORT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RETREAT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | JANUARY 30-31, 2024

RETREAT OBJECTIVES

What are we walking away from the retreat with?

- Strengthened interpersonal connections, fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere among Board members.
- Formulated a shared vision for the future of Beaufort.
- Agreed upon and set clear priorities for 2024, providing a framework for decision-making and action plans in the upcoming year.

KEY AGENDA ITEMS

- Creative Problem-Solving
- Municipal Services 1:1s
- State of the Town
- Envisioning the future
- Key Priorities for 2024
- Guest Speakers

MAIN OUTCOMES

The Board identified the following priorities for 2024:

- **Policy Priorities**
 - Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) update
 - Code enforcement
 - Explore communication between staff/board/residents
 - Short-term rentals
 - Adoption of a multi-year financial plan
 - Town's parking program update
 - Main street program
 - Adoption of a parks and rec master plan
 - Establish Affordable Housing Committee
 - Establish Arts Council (or endorse what's existing)
 - Update Town Values
 - Facility Naming Policy
- **Long-term Priorities:**
 - Art
 - Resiliency
 - Community character
 - Move from a tourist town to family-friendly
 - Communication

• Budget Priorities

- USDA-funded water and sewer infrastructure projects
- Waterfront Asset Improvement project (land/water-based activities)
- High-Rate Infiltration Basin (HRIB) project
- Trestle walk project
- Municipal facility replacements
- Stormwater enterprise fund

Based on the Board's vision of Beaufort, they value:

- **Careful Stewardship:** We pledge to protect Beaufort's environment, ensure community safety, and centralize public safety services, preserving our cultural heritage and vital infrastructure.
- **Local Leadership:** Beaufort aims to lead regionally, embracing progressiveness, resilience, and a commitment to education, continuously seeking improvements and innovative solutions.
- **Inclusive Living:** Rejecting divisions, we commit to creating a balanced, inclusive community with diverse housing and spaces that celebrate everyone.
- **Responsive Governance:** Our governance is responsive, building strong partnerships, recognizing people as invaluable resources, and ensuring transparency in our actions.
- **Cultural Enhancement:** Beaufort dedicates itself to cultural and economic enrichment, promoting the arts, fostering connectivity, and creating a vibrant community with green spaces and water access.



Retreat Purpose

The Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioners convened for a retreat with the core purposes of building rapport among Board members, unifying around a collective vision, and setting goals for the next year. The retreat took place over two days, from January 30-31st, 2024, at the Beaufort Hotel. It was professionally facilitated by Fountainworks, a public sector-focused strategy and management consulting firm. This document summarizes the retreat's agenda and the Board's input. Comments were captured as the conversation flowed and do not reflect any priority unless otherwise noted.

The outcomes of the retreat included:

What are we walking away from the retreat with?

- We have strengthened interpersonal connections, fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere among Board members.
- We have begun to formulate a shared vision for the future of Beaufort.
- We have agreed upon and set clear priorities, providing a framework for decision-making and action plans for the upcoming year.

The agenda for the retreat included:

- **Day 1:**
 - Welcome and Icebreaker
 - Exploring How We Solve Problems
 - Municipal Services: Who, What, Where, When, and How?
 - State of the Town presentations
 - Main Street Program Primer
 - Envisioning the Future of Beaufort
- **Day 2:**
 - Recap and Reflections
 - Identifying focus areas and priorities
 - Guest Speakers - Tracy Mancini, President, Carteret Community College & Kyle Marek, President, Carteret Healthcare
 - Building Partnerships – Senator Sanderson, Representative Cairns
 - Guest Speakers – Erin Wynia, Abbie Britt (NCLM)

Participants:

- Sharon Harker, Mayor
- Charles "Bucky" Oliver, Commissioner
- Melvin Cooper, Commissioner
- John LoPiccolo, Commissioner
- Sarah Spiegler, Commissioner
- Paula Gillikin, Commissioner
- Department Heads
- Todd Clark, Town Manager
- Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk

After a welcome from Mayor Harker and Town Manager Todd Clark, Warren Miller of Fountainworks introduced himself and Rachel Werz and went over the agenda and desired outcomes for Day 1.

DAY ONE

Beaufort Through Photos

The Board was asked to spend some time thinking about places that represent Beaufort to them or places and things in Beaufort that they have a special connection with. Printed photos of significant and valuable places in town were displayed and the Board was asked to choose one or two that held meaning to them. Then, the Board discussed why they chose the photos they did, what those places mean to them individually, as well as what they may mean to the residents of Beaufort. The photos chosen were displayed on the agenda for the duration of the retreat as a visual reminder.



Beaufort Through Photos

The Board was also asked to share with the larger group any themes they noticed from their discussions. Themes that were observed include:

- Children and the future growth of Beaufort

- Connection to water & the town’s natural resources
- Historic significance of town sites
- Community – all who call Beaufort home

Exploring How We Solve Problems

The Board then explored how creative problem-solving connects with the work they have in front of them for 2024. Solving modern, complex problems in local government often requires creative thinking, and these activities help to stimulate that out-of-the-box thinking.

In groups, the Board were given crafting materials and created a prototype of a product that fulfills a need in society. Their products were then presented to the group. To debrief, the Board explored thinking preferences as they reflected on the process of coming up with their prototype in their group.



As they learned about each step in the creative process, they discussed which steps their group spent the most time on, and which steps could have used more time. The Board also reflected on which step they had a natural preference towards, and how that might affect how they work with others. Together, the Board took some time to delve into how their thinking preferences were balanced on the Board. Mayor Harker shared about the importance of learning each other’s preferences so that the Board can learn how to work more productively together to solve problems.

Municipal Services Activity

After the discussion on thinking preferences, the Board transitioned to a station activity to learn more about the “Who, What, When, Where, and How” of Municipal Services in Beaufort. The Board rotated between six stations and learned key facts and priorities from department heads. Department heads also recorded any questions or comments from the Board, seen below.

Station #1 - Admin./Finance/HR/PIO/Parks

- **Questions**
 - PIO
 - Media request to commissioners
 - Records retention electronic vs. hard copies
 - Parks and Rec
 - What does the future look like?
 - *Board* direction
 - Comp plan
 - Town core values across the departments
- **Comments**
 - HR
 - Employee retention, core values, focus
 - Finance
 - Grants, positions, and future management
 - First Tryon
 - Debt capacity
 - Clarity on financial position
 - Things we are doing well
 - Park signs
 - Community events
 - Cost of living, workforce housing, employee recruitment
 - Continue to improve on communication, messages to everyone in town

Station #2 - Fire Department

- **Questions**
 - Capacity for more volunteers
 - Boat response
 - Environment issues
 - ISO rating
 - Service area
 - Next ISO rating
 - Who sets fire districts

- Revenues
- New fire truck
- Down east response
- Training affects ISO rating
- OSTTA staffing standards
- High water vehicle during hurricanes
- Station locations
- Budget
- **Comments**
 - Cand. tour helped them understand sleep/family balance

Station #3 - Planning

- **Questions**
 - When does *Pruitt* open?
 - Is development slowing?
 - When will Jersey Mikes open?
 - Community aesthetics for new development
- **Comments**
 - N/A

Station #4 - Police Department

- **Questions**
 - Traffic concerns
 - Staffing and school crossing issue
 - Homelessness resources
 - Audience updates/suggestions
 - Ride-along program, house checks
- **Comments**
 - Speed, noise, timely notifications
 - Constant efforts to support staff/culture

Station #5 - Public Utilities

- **Questions**
 - HRIB- Where are we?
 - What is our current sewer capacity?
 - What is our sewer capacity, when is the time of year with highest flows, has it changed in the past few years?
 - What is your biggest challenge? Do you see any new challenges in next 5 years?
- **Comments**
 - N/A

Station #6 - Public Works

- **Questions**

- What are your challenges?
- What can we do to help make sure we don't have flooding in future developments?
- Time locks for bathrooms?
 - Opening bathrooms early for events
- **Comments**
 - Leveraging outside funding for resiliency, etc.
 - Professional park study story map mentioned
 - Public education about stormwater
 - Pole barn in short term
 - Public works site planning at town promised property
 - Walkability

After the Board talked to department heads at each stations, they heard key presentations informing them about the State of the Town.

- Current Financial Position - Christi Wood
- Growth Trends and Policies (Policy Matrix) - Kyle Garner
- Water & Sewer Capacity - Greg Meshaw

Focus Areas

To frame up an afternoon of visioning exercises, the Board looked at five different areas of interest:

- Economic Development
- Public Safety
- Good Government
- Cultural and Recreational Amenities
- Infrastructure

For each area of interest, the Board was asked to answer two questions:

- What do we want to hold onto? (what are we currently doing that we want to continue)
- What do we aspire to? (what would we like to be doing in this area)

Cultural & Recreational Amenities

- What do we want to hold onto?
 - Public access to natural rescue
 - Cedar St.
 - Protect cultural integrity
 - Great staff
 - P & R Board

- Maintain intention to grow (*Board, staff, citizens*)
- Aesthetics
- Parks
- Splash pad
- What do we aspire to?
 - Expand recreational opportunities across town
 - Community center
 - More kid-friendly (family-oriented)
 - Cultural center
 - Aesthetics of new development
 - Ann St. Park
 - New parks with greenway
 - Grow public parks
 - More parks/greenspace
 - Plan for integrating parks/greenspace with economic vitality and ecosystem resilience
 - More inclusive, integrate the different sides of town
 - Improve environmental quality
 - All citizens feel welcome at town events

Good Government

- What do we want to hold onto?
 - Good employees/dedicated staff
 - Engaged citizens
 - Establish a sense of place
 - Transparency
 - Staff
 - People
 - Consistent messaging and communication
 - Sense of place
- What do we aspire to?
 - More consistent messaging and communication
 - Active leadership in addressing side effects of gentrification
 - Open communication between town administration and elected officials (BOC)
 - Build a relationship with the county
 - Transparency
 - Strengthening and/or building collaborative relationships with key stakeholders
 - Support working-class, families
 - Housing
 - Succession, mentoring, self-improvement
 - informal sessions for town meetings

- Sustainable long-term capital funding plan

Infrastructure

- What do we want to hold on to?
 - Historic identity/structures (small-town charm)
 - Control over water and sewer
 - Keep Beaufort livable during USDA construction
- What do we aspire to?
 - Better road
 - I & I
 - HRIB permitted
 - Sewer expansion
 - Road improvement
 - Move HRIB effort forward
 - Resilient natural/nature-based infrastructure that supports built infrastructure
 - Water long-term replacement strategy (think salt H2O intrusion)
 - Municipal campus that is resilient and more accessible to citizens; Functional
 - Sewer expansion “pay to play” plan
 - Repairs/replacement of old infrastructure
 - Future infrastructure that is resilient to flooding, storms, climate

Public Safety

- What do we want to hold on to?
 - Keep focus on retention
 - Maintain quality and safety of life in Beaufort
 - Staff/retention
 - Strong leadership
 - Strong Police Dept – community engagement
- What do we aspire to?
 - Highest level of service
 - Improving service
 - Water response
 - Public safety workforce that grows as our population grows
 - Safest town in the county!

Economic Development

- What do we want to hold on to?
 - Tourism
 - Downtown area
 - 70 shopping district
 - Good planning dept. (helps business)
 - Support events that draw visitors
 - Promoting and supporting existing business

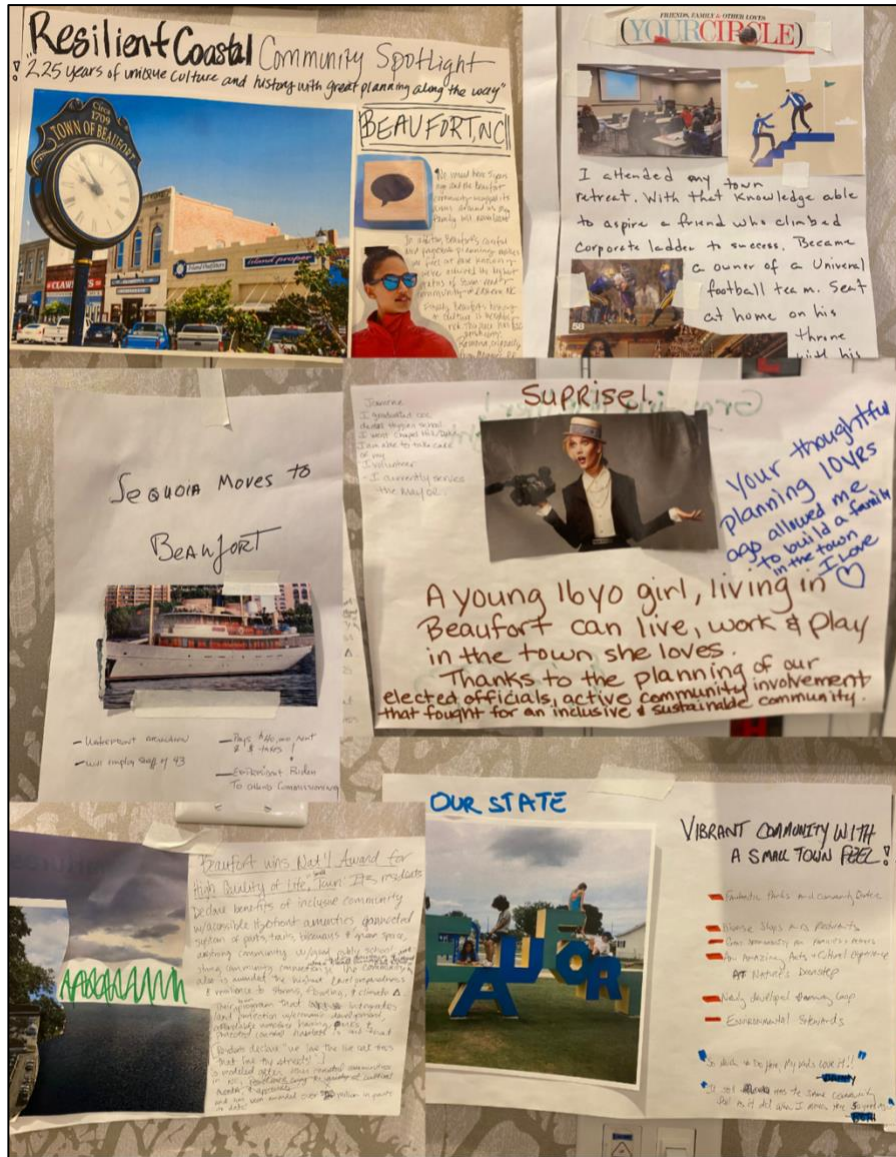
- Historic district
- What do we aspire to?
 - Promoting revitalization
 - Resilient economy / sustainable growth
 - Diversity
 - Workforce housing
 - Main street program
 - Jobs
 - Support diverse businesses
 - Diversify beyond tourism
 - Support opportunities for young professionals and families
 - Resilient communities

This exercise prompted Board members to reflect on matters important to them and transitioned their mindset towards envisioning their ideal Beaufort.

Visioning Activities

As the Board segued into the subsequent visioning activities; the objective was to work to collaboratively shape a shared vision for Beaufort's future. The Board participated in two visioning exercises that presented a creative opportunity, encouraging the Board to shift perspectives. Whether putting themselves in the shoes of a resident or envisioning Beaufort in a magazine 10 years from then, these activities aimed to synchronize individual perspectives, fostering a unified vision that will creatively guide the town's development. The following activities provided a structured approach for the Board to articulate common goals and aspirations, promoting cohesion in steering Beaufort's course ahead.

1. **Persona Activity:** The Board engaged in a creative exercise, adopting a citizen's perspective by crafting a fictional resident with a name, age, job, and a unique story within the town. This imaginative process prompted members to consider individual values, preferences, and quotes about the town, fostering a diverse understanding of what the community means to each member.
2. **Beaufort Cover Story Activity:** Transported a decade into the future, Board members envisioned Beaufort being celebrated on a magazine cover for its excellence. Using magazine themes and prompts, they created headlines, supporting details, key quotes, and images capturing the town's successful and appealing future. This activity provided a collaborative platform for members to articulate a shared vision and explore the elements that make Beaufort an exceptional place to live, work, and stay.

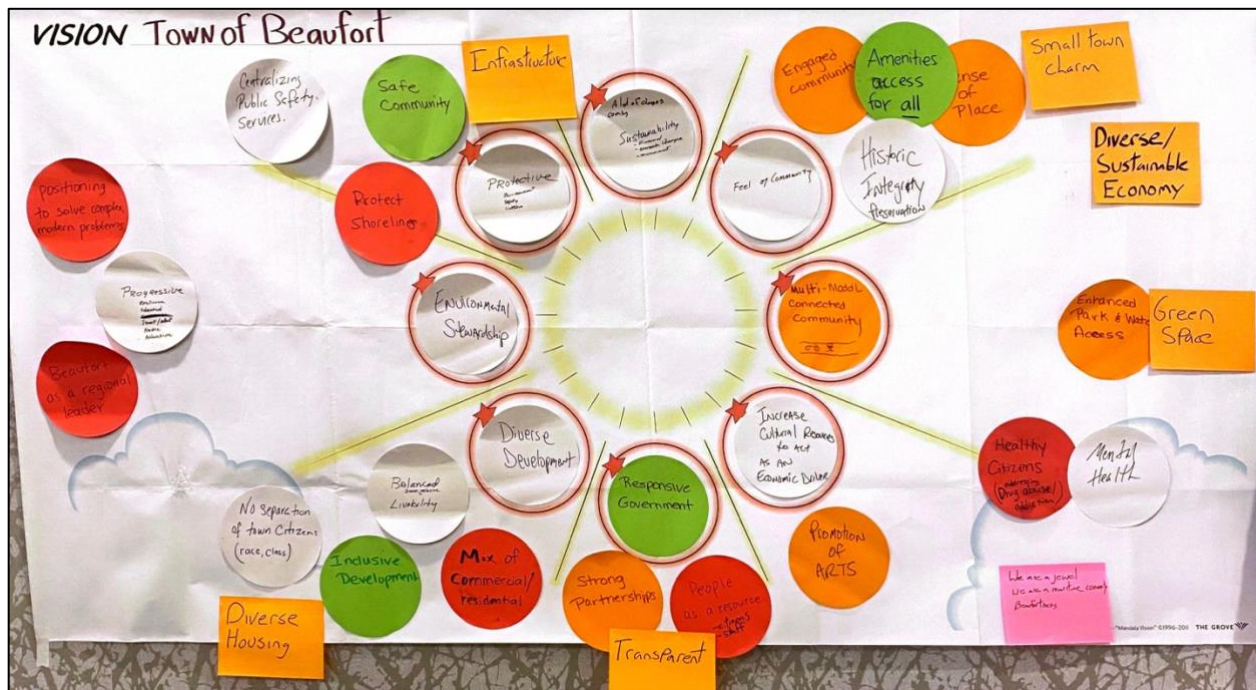


Collage of the Board's Cover Stories

Vision of Beaufort

Building on the insights gained from the focus area activity and two immersive visioning exercises, the Board transitioned into a higher-level perspective as they collectively and thoughtfully contemplated the overarching vision for Beaufort's future. The Board pondered the high-level elements essential to transforming their shared visions into

tangible realities within the town. This transition marked a pivotal phase in aligning aspirations, setting the stage for a comprehensive and forward-looking vision for Beaufort, with an emphasis on shared values and common goals among the Board members.



Vision of Beaufort

Vision Themes:

- Protective (environment, safety, culture)
 - Safe community
 - Centralizing public safety services
 - Protect shorelines
 - Infrastructure
 - Environmental stewardship
- Beaufort as a Regional Leader
 - Progressive (Resilient, educated, attentive, aware)
 - positioned to solve complex, modern problems
- Diverse development
 - Balanced (diverse, inclusive) Liveability
 - Inclusive development
 - No separation of town citizens (race, class)
 - Diverse housing
 - Mix of commercial/residential
- Responsive government
 - Strong partnerships
 - People as a resource

- Citizens
- Staff
- Transparent
- Increase cultural resources to act as an economic driver
 - Promotion of arts
- Multi-modal connected community
- Diverse/sustainable economy
- Enhanced park and water access
 - Green space
- Healthy citizens (addressing drug abuse/addiction)
 - Mental health
- Feel of community
 - Engaged community
 - Historic integrity preservation
 - Amenities access for all
 - Sense of place
 - We are a jewel
 - We are a maritime community
 - “Beaufortness”
 - Small-town charm
- A lot of changes coming
 - Sustainability
 - Financial
 - Economic changes
 - Environment

Based on this vision for Beaufort, the Board values:

- **Careful Stewardship:** We pledge to protect Beaufort's environment, ensure community safety, and centralize public safety services, preserving our cultural heritage and vital infrastructure.
- **Local Leadership:** Beaufort aims to lead regionally, embracing progressiveness, resilience, and a commitment to education, continuously seeking improvements and innovative solutions.
- **Inclusive Living:** Rejecting divisions, we commit to creating a balanced, inclusive community with diverse housing and spaces that celebrate everyone.
- **Responsive Governance:** Our governance is responsive, building strong partnerships, recognizing people as invaluable resources, and ensuring transparency in our actions.
- **Cultural Enhancement:** Beaufort dedicates itself to cultural and economic enrichment, promoting the arts, fostering connectivity, and creating a vibrant community with green spaces and water access.

DAY TWO

Identifying Priorities for 2024

In the next phase of the retreat, the Board delved into defining the policy priorities for 2024, a crucial aspect of shaping the trajectory of Beaufort's development. To inform this prioritization, the Board received comprehensive insights from staff regarding ongoing projects. Building upon this foundation, the Board had the opportunity to augment the list by incorporating additional priorities and projects deemed vital for the town's progress. A collaborative effort between the Board and staff resulted in the identification of 12 priorities, each in various stages of development, ranging from initial exploration to projects already in progress. Some priorities align with budgetary considerations, as indicated on the left in the accompanying picture. These priorities provide a roadmap for the Town's focused endeavors in the upcoming year. Also included are some of the long-term priorities that were discussed by the Board.

Budget Priorities:

- USDA-funded water and sewer infrastructure projects
- Waterfront Asset Improvement project (land/water-based activities)
- High-Rate Infiltration Basin (HRIB) project
- Trestle walk project
- Municipal facility replacements
- Stormwater enterprise fund

Policy Priorities

- Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) update
 - Udo Process and Community Engagement
- Code enforcement
 - Review code
 - Address derelict structures
 - food trucks / noise
- Explore communication
 - Livestreaming of town meetings/recording for benefit of residents
- Short-term rentals
- Adoption of a multi-year financial plan
- Town's parking program update
- Main street program
- Adoption of a parks and rec master plan
 - Ann St.
 - P + R presentation

Town of Beaufort

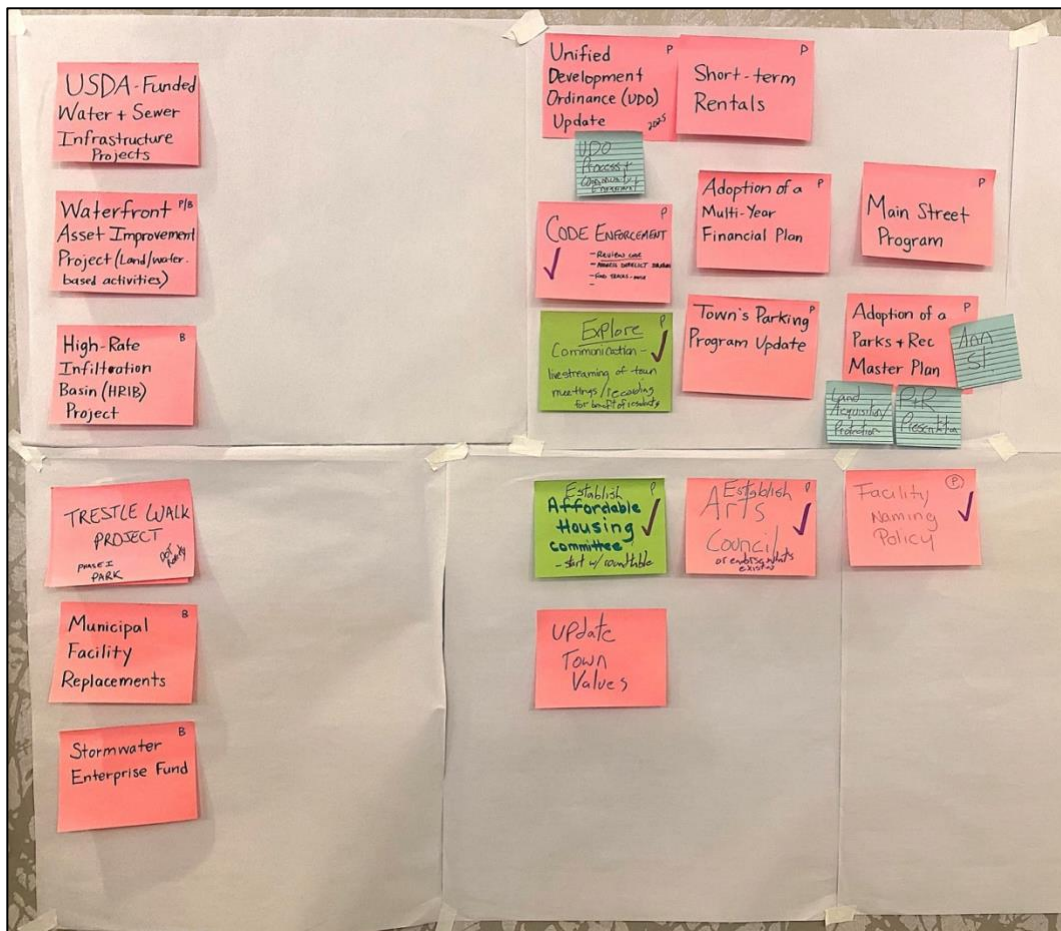
Board of Commissioners Retreat Summary



- Land acquisition/protection
- Establish Affordable Housing Committee
 - Start w/roundtable and identifying stakeholders
- Establish Arts Council (or endorse what's existing)
- Update Town Values
- Facility Naming Policy

Long-term Priorities

- Art
- Resiliency
- Community character
- More from a tourist town to a family-friendly
 - More family program activities
- Communication
 - BOC materials at least 1 week in advance



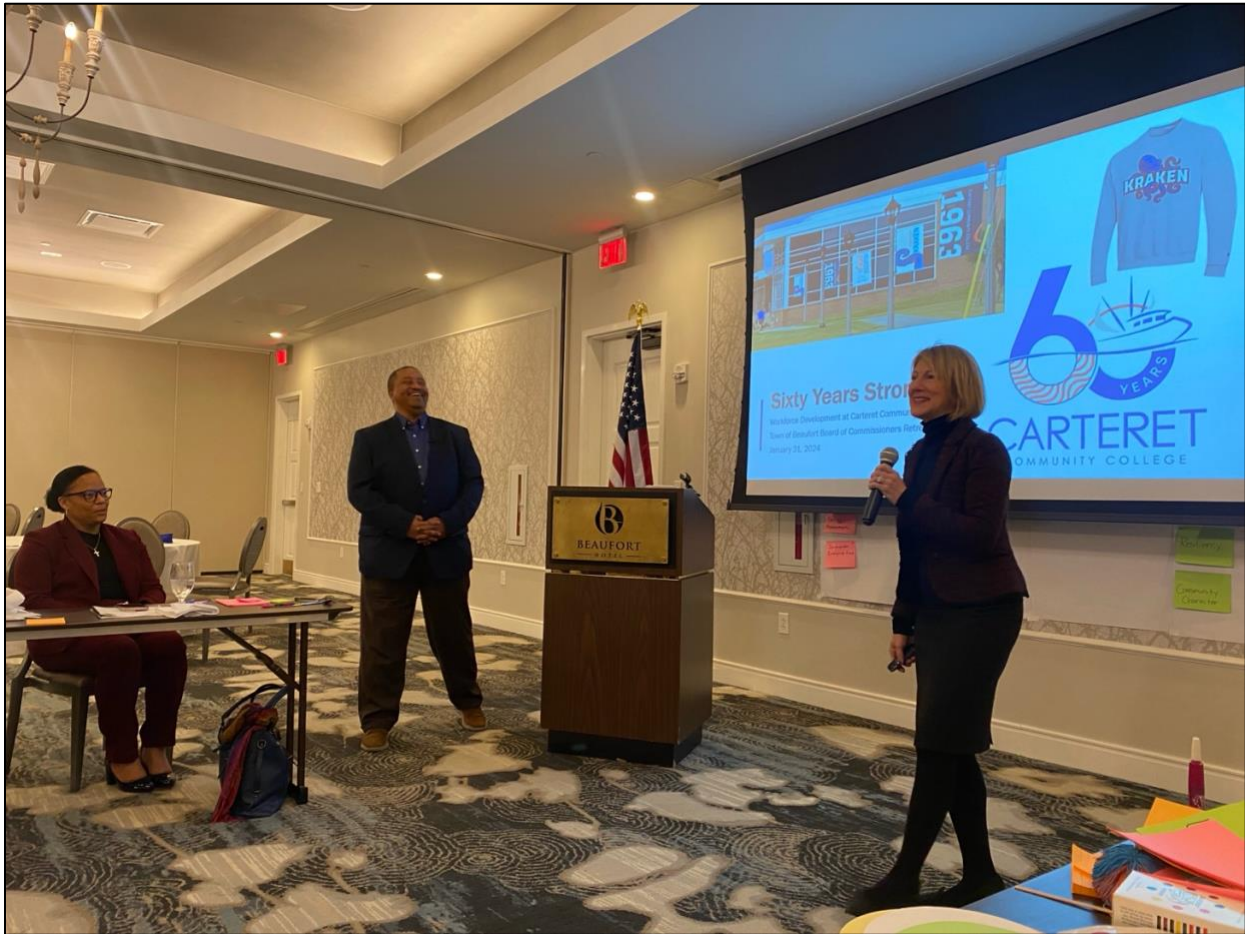
The Board's Priorities for 2024

Guest Speakers – Tracy Mancini, Kyle Marek

The Board then heard enlightening presentations delivered by our distinguished guest speakers, Dr. Tracy Mancini, President of Carteret Community College and Kyle Marek, President of Carteret Healthcare. Kyle Marek meticulously detailed ongoing and future projects within Carteret Healthcare, outlining a multifaceted approach to address the evolving healthcare needs of our community. From the ambitious renovation and revitalization of surgical services to incorporating orthopedic robotic technology and addressing the pressing shortage of neurologists, the comprehensive strategies discussed reflect a proactive stance toward enhancing healthcare services in Beaufort. The increased demand for cancer care, especially post-COVID, was underscored, with plans for a significant \$50 million expansion of cancer centers. The imperative need for additional oncologists and infrastructure improvements, including expanded parking and addressing access issues in the Emergency Department, were highlighted. Kyle Marek also shed light on critical workforce challenges, emphasizing the necessity of competitive wages, affordable housing, and innovative recruitment strategies.

Dr. Tracy Mancini and Vice President of Corporate and Community Education Perry Harker presented the remarkable initiatives undertaken by Carteret Community College in the realm of education and workforce development. Celebrating 60 years of educational excellence, the college's commitment to fostering growth and innovation was evident. Dr. Mancini outlined the institution's dedication to expanding nursing programs, developing a surgical techs program, and creating academies covering diverse fields such as carpentry, electrical work, and HVAC. The establishment of a Health Sciences Simulation Center, coupled with efforts to increase minority representation in healthcare professions through the RCLP (Rural College Leaders Project), exemplified the college's visionary approach. The commitment to leveraging technology for education and telehealth, as demonstrated through the USDA grant for equipment at satellite locations across the county, further emphasized the college's commitment to community engagement.

The Board gained understanding of the collaborative efforts underway to shape the future of Beaufort's healthcare and educational landscape. The wealth of information shared by these speakers forms a crucial backdrop for our collective visioning and planning for the betterment of our community.



Presentation by Dr. Tracy Mancini & Perry Harker

Building Partnerships – Senator Sanderson, Representative Cairns

The Board of Commissioners then had the privilege of gaining valuable insights from esteemed guests Senator Sanderson and Representative Cairns. This marked a significant occasion as the Board welcomed these dedicated state representatives from the House and Senate. With the upcoming short session from April to June on the horizon, these representatives provided critical insights into legislative priorities, emphasizing areas such as tax reduction, regulatory reform, and government downsizing. This session marked an important moment, initiating the establishment of a collaborative relationship aimed at advancing Beaufort's interests at the state level. Their proactive engagement showcased a deep commitment to understanding and addressing Beaufort's priorities, setting the stage for collaborative dialogue during this interim period between sessions. In the past, their

efforts resulted in significant achievements, securing substantial funding for vital projects like the Maritime Museum, airport, jail, and community college. This segment not only served as a platform to discuss past accomplishments but also delved into emerging concerns, including de-annexation, homeowners' insurance rate hikes, and challenges faced by homeowners' associations dealing with bad debt on timeshares. The exchange marked the beginning of a new partnership forged between our local leaders and Beaufort's representatives in the state legislature.



Mayor Harker introduces Senator Sanderson & Representative Cairns

After hearing from Beaufort's State representatives, guest speakers Erin Wynia and Abbie Britt from the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) took the floor. They introduced the vital work they undertake and informed the Board about the array of services and resources they provide, encompassing advocacy, education, training, and more. In addition to shedding light on their organization's offerings, they shared their own insights into the impending legislative short session, offering the Board a comprehensive perspective to enhance their understanding and set realistic expectations for the upcoming legislative agenda.

Wrapping Up

In wrapping up the retreat, Mayor Harker and Town Manager Todd Clark expressed their gratitude for everyone's participation and the significant progress made. Looking ahead, they mentioned their aspiration to strengthen partnerships by extending an invitation to Beaufort County for future collaborations.

Closing the event, Warren Miller—Fountainworks' facilitator—shared a few concluding remarks, expressing gratitude to the entire group for their active engagement and valuable contributions.

The retreat was then officially adjourned.