

The regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Front Royal, Virginia was held on April 23, 2012, in the Warren County Government Center’s Board Meeting Room. Mayor Darr led Council and those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and a Moment of Silence. The roll was called at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Timothy W. Darr  
Vice Mayor Chris W. Holloway  
Councilman Thomas E. Conkey  
Councilman Carson C. Lauder, Jr.  
Councilman N. Shae Parker  
Councilman Thomas H. Sayre  
Councilman Hollis L. Tharpe  
Town Manager Steven M. Burke, P.E.  
Town Attorney Douglas W. Napier  
Clerk of Council Jennifer E. Berry, CMC

(The above listed members represent the full body of Council as authorized in the Town Charter.)

*Vice Mayor Holloway moved, seconded by Councilman Tharpe, that Council approve the Regular Council Meeting minutes of April 9, 2012 as presented.*

Vote: Yes – Conkey, Holloway, Lauder, Parker, Tharpe and Sayre  
No – N/A  
Abstain – N/A  
Absent – N/A  
(Mayor Darr did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)

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**RECEIPT OF PETITIONS OR CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE PUBLIC**

W. Allan Edward, of 115 Lonesome Flats Road, read the following into the record:  
I have been a member of the Police Chief’s Advisory Board for the last seven years. I’m just a citizen advocate who believes that a good solid Police Department is fundamental to building and maintaining a desirable community. That’s why I am supporting the Department’s initiative to establish a Master Police Officer Program (MPO).

You see, I was amazed when I learned what an arduous task it is to recruit, train and deploy an officer to serve the Town of Front Royal. I also learned there is an unusually high statistical turnover of officers, especially during the first several years of employment.

Having served in the Navy, I remember the popular belief U.S. sailors had that “The base we were assigned to at the time was...well, not very good” – there was a phrase for it, but I won’t repeat it here. But looking back; “The last base we were on was really great. And the next base we hope to be assigned to, well we heard it is just, simply outstanding.”

Young, impressionable officers no doubt have similar perceptions of the past, present and future as I had then. There is a different – they have the option of leaving their job, whereas I did not. If an officer does leave early, the hunt for a replacement must begin all over again.

One noted author, Police Chief Dwayne Orrick, wrote in an article for the Police Chief magazine, and I quote, "It is amazing how much we have invested in an officer; after three years of training. It can easily measure over \$100,000, but we will let that investment, that doesn't show up as a line item, walk out the door for a one thousand dollar pay raise in another community."

He goes on to say, "Show me where I can get a \$100,000 tractor for \$1,000 and I will want to know if there are any others I can get from you."

In 2012 dollars, it costs upwards of \$166,000 to recruit, train and deploy one police officer for three years. If an officer leaves prematurely, the Town might just hear a huge sucking sound of budget dollars going down the drain; also the whirling sound of Julie Bush's Human Resource Department preparing exit materials, then the flip-flip-flip sound of Town money being counted out to start the recruiting process all over again.

What can be done? Well, the Master Police Officer Program provides an incentive/reward model based on achievement instead of relying on the old model based on a simple need to have a steady job and a salary. It provides an office with opportunities to achieve his or her personal growth objectives within the Department.

This program requires investment on the part of the Office to achieve these goals, leading to increased responsibility, better pay and a sense of positive involvement. I've concluded that this is an initiative that can achieve dramatic reductions in those sucking, whirring and flipping sounds and I hope Town Council will make sure it's in the Town budget this coming year.

With the time remaining, I'd also like to put in a few words for Janice Hart, our Community Relations and Certified Crime Prevention Specialist in the Front Royal Police Department and her irreplaceable role in our community. We need to have Janice in a full-time position now, rather than the part-time one she currently has. This woman is a highly competent, dedicated and fully vetted employee and deserves to be full-time with the Front Royal Police. I hope the Town Council will approve this action for Janice; I consider her to be one of our most valuable police assets.

Mr. Burke noted that Jennifer McDonald is working with EPA representatives and would not be attending the meeting. He noted that the meeting thus far had been very positive regarding changes to the properties around the Avtex site.

### **REPORT OF THE MAYOR, COUNCIL & STAFF**

Mr. Burke:

- Reported that paving work will begin in Warren Park soon
- Noted that the Town would be doing hydrant flushing over the next few weeks and advised citizens to be aware of rushing water at various points around Town;
- Thanked Mr. Camp for his work to obtain a new development survey.

Councilman Conkey asked about the Visitor's Center Manager position. Mr. Burke stated that they were in the process of finalizing the position. He noted that the Town had extended an offer to an individual and they anticipate the review of that offer by the end of the week.

Councilman Conkey apologized for his comments on the radio, noting that he was under the impression that someone had been hired.

Councilman Parker asked that Council direct Staff to begin an RFP for architects for ways that they could renovate and utilize the Town Hall as the new Police Department.

Councilman Sayre noted that a query was done regarding the cat situation throughout the community. He stated that there were a few grant opportunities available, and the information can be extended to the Humane Society. It was noted that it was only for cat sterilization, not for the collection of the cats.

In response to Councilman Sayre's question, Mr. Napier noted that the Council could place wording into an ordinance form should Council choose to regulate cats in the community. Councilman Sayre noted that it would be on an upcoming Liaison Committee meeting hopefully. Mr. Burke added that a letter had been sent to the County on the cat issue.

Councilman Conkey asked about the paving machine and the potential for paving the area down by the river. Mr. Burke explained that Mr. Hannigan was negotiating the rental of the machine and they would begin with alleys to become acclimated with the function of the paver.

Councilman Lauder stated that Chief Furr and Mr. Edwards had explained the Master Police Program to him, and he had concluded that the program was desperately needed in the Town of Front Royal to maintain officers in the community.

Councilman Sayre noted that on Saturday he attended the 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration of James Kilby and it was a great event.

Mayor Darr noted that he was pleased to attend many recent Town events, including the Chamber After Hours evening, the Salvation Army's Annual Dinner, the South Ruritan Dinner and Saturday's Appalachian Trail Designation. He pointed out that there were only fifteen communities along the entire trail and he was proud that the Town of Front Royal had been chosen as such a community.

Mayor Darr asked if there were any proposals for additions or deletions to the agenda.

*Councilman Conkey moved, seconded by Councilman Parker, that Item 7G, Warren Memorial Hospital Transformers Bid, be removed from the agenda entirely.*

Vote: Yes – Conkey, Holloway, Lauder, Parker, Tharpe and Sayre  
No – N/A  
Abstain – N/A  
Absent – N/A  
(Mayor Darr did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)  
(By Roll Call)

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**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

- A. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Budget Amendment - Byrne Justice Assistance Grant for Computer for Police Department
- B. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Acceptance of Utilities and Release of Bond for Front Royal Dialysis Center
- C. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Network Infrastructure of Administration Building
- D. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Proclamation – Arbor Day
- E. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Police Department’s Field Training Officer Salary Adjustment
- F. COUNCIL APPROVAL – Bid for Vehicles for Town Manager and Finance Department
- G. ~~COUNCIL APPROVAL – Bid for Transformers for Warren Memorial Hospital~~

*Vice Mayor Holloway moved, seconded by Councilman Conkey, that Council approve the Consent Agenda as presented.*

Vote: Yes – Conkey, Holloway, Lauder, Parker, Tharpe and Sayre  
 No – N/A  
 Abstain – N/A  
 Absent – N/A  
 (Mayor Darr did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)  
 (By Roll Call)

**COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION – Board of Zoning Appeals**

*Councilman Parker moved, seconded by Councilman Sayre, that Council recommend R. Wayne Sealock to the Judge of the Warren County Circuit Court for re-appointment to the Front Royal Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) to fill a five-year term ending May 1, 2017.*

Councilman Sayre noted that he seemed very qualified to continue his work with the BZA.

Vote: Yes – Conkey, Holloway, Lauder, Parker, Sayre and Tharpe  
 No – N/A  
 Abstain – N/A  
 Absent – N/A  
 (Mayor Darr did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)  
 (By Roll Call)

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Jennifer E. Berry  
 Clerk of Council