



TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Monday, March 8th, 2021 at 6:30 PM
Town Hall Conference Room

The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda. This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com.

Closed Meeting – Personnel and Consultation with Legal Counsel

Vice Mayor Cockrell moved, seconded by Councilman Meza, that Town Council go into Closed Meeting pursuant to discuss the Front Royal EDA ("FREDA") Board of Directors, the relationship of the Town Police Department funding and the Warren EDA and the litigation between the Town and the Warren EDA and Personnel, pursuant to the following provisions of the Code of Virginia:

- (1) Discussion and consideration of prospective candidates for appointment of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of the FREDA, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711. A. 1.*
- (2) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual litigation, where such consultation or briefing in Open Meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; pursuant to Section 2.2-3711. A. 7*
- (3) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by Town Council regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711. A.*
- (4) The discussion and consideration of prospective candidates for employment and/or the assignment and appointment of specific public appointees or employees of the Town, pursuant to Section 2.2- 3711. A. 1. of the Code of Virginia.*

There was a unanimous consensus of Council to go into Closed Session.

Councilman Lloyd moved, seconded by Councilman Meza, that Council certify that to the best of each member's knowledge, as recognized by each Council member's affirmative vote, that only such public business matters lawfully exempted from Open Meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the Closed Meeting by Council, and that the vote of each individual member of Council be taken by roll call and recorded and included in the minutes of the meeting of Town Council.

Vote: Yes – Mayor Holloway, Councilmen Cockrell, Gillispie, Lloyd, McFadden, Meza & Thompson

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

ROLL CALL

FY21-22 Proposed Budget Additional Discussion – Finance Director Wilson noted that there would be a Public Hearing for the proposed tax rates at the next regular council meeting. He added that a Public Hearing regarding the water and sewer rate increases would be held on April 26th, 2021. Mr. Wilson asked Council if they had any additional questions regarding the proposed budget. There were none.

Update on Mayor's 100-day Goals

- a. **Afton Inn** – Town Manager Hicks pointed out that the Afton Inn sale had already gone to closing and the project was moving forward.
- b. **Economic Development Authority** – Mr. Hicks stated that Town Staff was still accepting applications for the Front Royal Economic Development Authority and the next step would be for Council to interview and select candidates for the Board.
- c. **Blighted Building Program** – Mr. Hicks explained that there had not been much progress in finding a solution for blighted buildings, but that the Town's Planning and Zoning Department would continue to explore options.
- d. **Town Building Inspections Office** – Mr. Hicks presented Council with a hand-out that outlined recent new developments within town limits. He added that he had prior experience working as a Building Code Official and could temporarily step into the role if necessary. He explained that the Town would potentially still need a third-party to complete a cost analysis before officially deciding whether to move forward. Mayor Holloway pointed out that a Building Inspection Office would also help with the Blighted Building Program.
- e. **Credit Card Fees Elimination** – Mr. Hicks stated that Town Staff had been looking into the possibility of eliminating credit card fees and that it would cost the town an estimated \$300,000 - \$350,000. Councilman Meza asked if the Enterprise Fund overages could absorb the cost. He stated that, in the long-term, absorbing the fees would become 'the cost of doing business.' Councilman Lloyd pointed out that citizens currently have the option to pay with a check or cash to avoid having to absorb the fees. Vice Mayor Cockrell agreed and stated that she did not want to see all citizens have to pay for the choice of a few.

Continued Discussion regarding the "Order of Business" for Regular Agendas – A draft agenda prepared by Town Staff was presented to Council. Councilman Meza suggested either adding an opportunity for Council to speak directly after 'Public Comments' or moving the 'Reports of Councilmembers, Mayor and Town Manager' to fall directly after the 'Public Comment' Period. He stated the importance of Councilmembers having the opportunity to correct misinformation and address citizen concerns sooner, rather than at the end of the meeting. Council decided to move the 'Reports of Councilmembers, Mayor and Town Manager' to follow 'Public Comment's and 'Public Hearings.'

Consideration of Agreement to Complete Afton Inn Property Work – Town Attorney, Doug Napier, expressed that there had been some concern raised that 2 East Main Street LLC would not finish the Afton Inn Project in a timely manner. He explained that he had drafted an agreement that if the project was not completed within a thirty-month timeframe, they would be required to pay \$200 per day until completion. Mr. Hicks added that he had been in contact with 2 East Main Street LLC, and they were extremely excited and ready to get the project started. He explained that he would be involved in the site plan review, building inspection process, and hold bi-weekly meetings to help ensure their success. Mayor Holloway requested they come before Council to provide updates.

Request a Public Hearing for Lease of Office Space for Probation and Parole – Council all agreed to allow the Public Hearing.

Update on Masks and Medical Freedom Resolution – Councilman Lloyd expressed that there was some confusion among businesses regarding face coverings and what was required by Virginia’s Executive Order. He added that citizens with legitimate health concerns were not receiving necessary accommodations. He suggested Council adopt a formal resolution with the intent to educate the community and ‘speak to potential constitutional legal issues.’

Mayor Holloway pointed out that some states were already lifting mask mandates due to vaccinations. Councilman Thompson asked if businesses would be forced to comply if they did not feel comfortable doing so. She stated her belief that Council should not ‘be in the business of telling other people what to do with their business.’

Councilman Lloyd suggested the Town put something together that was purely informational to include with utility bills, and place on the Town’s website. Mayor Holloway added that those citizens who did not watch the Work Session could misinterpret their intent. Council decided not to move forward with the Resolution.

Update on the Joint Board of Supervisors and Town Council Meeting Advance – Council requested that Town Staff identify potential dates for the Joint Board of Supervisors and Town Council Advance. Councilman Meza suggested using polling software to help narrow down which date would work best for the majority of Supervisors and Councilmen.

Special Events Ordinance, Policy, and Event Permit Application – Purchasing Manager, Alisa Scott, explained that the current Special Event Permit process is handled through the Town Managers Office. She noted that the Town’s Tourism Firm, JLL, had developed a matrix that would score special events and categorize them as Community Development Events or a Tourism Events. She added that the Town, the Chamber of Commerce, and JLL would work together to identify criteria to include in the matrix that would help determine if an event would require a street closure.

Open Discussion – Councilman Thompson asked her fellow Councilman to begin thinking, with the drug epidemic in mind, about a potential PILOT with Valley Health as well as the implementation of a neighborhood watch program.

Town Manager Hicks noted that he had requested Town Staff, the Chamber of Commerce, and JLL to identify and plan a possible Town sponsored event or festival.

Mayor adjourned the work session at 9:42 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Holloway, Vice Mayor Cockrell, Councilmen Gillispie, Lloyd, McFadden, Meza, and Thompson, Town Manager Steven Hicks, Town Attorney Doug Napier, Deputy Clerk of Council Mary Ellen Lynn, Finance Director BJ Wilson, Purchasing Manager Alisa Scott, Information Technology Director Todd Jones, members of the public and press.

Approved by Town Council

Date: March 22/2021