



TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Monday, March 13, 2023

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.

Councilwoman Morris seconded by Vice Mayor Wayne Sealock that Council appoint [Town Manager] Joe Waltz as Clerk pro tempore for tonight's meeting [March 13, 2023.]

Vote: Unanimous

ROLL CALL BY TOWN MANAGER

PRESENT: Mayor Lori A. Cockrell
 Councilwoman Melissa DeDomenico-Payne
 Councilman Joshua L. Ingram
 Councilwoman Amber F. Morris
 Councilman H. Bruce Rappaport
 Councilman Duane R. "Skip" Rogers
 Vice Mayor R. Wayne Sealock

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Joseph E. Waltz
 Town Attorney George M. Sonnett, Jr.
 Various member of Staff

ABSENT: Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley

ADDITION TO THE AGENDA: *Councilwoman Morris moved seconded by Vice Mayor Sealock to move #4 "Staff Retreat Preparation" to #5 and #5 "Open Discussion" to #6 AND add #4 "The Discussion and Consideration of a Text Amendment Change for Dynamic Life [Praise and Worship Center] for a proposed burial ground onsite [1600 John Marshall Highway] "*

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers DeDomenico-Payne, Ingram, Morris, Rappaport, Rogers, Vice Mayor Sealock
 No – N/A
 Absent – N/A
 Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL by Mayor Cockrell add item to the agenda as #5

FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 PROPOSED BUDGET PRESENTATION – Finance Director BJ Wilson gave an overview of the FY2023-2024 Budget. Councilman Rappaport asked for clarification on the 1% COLA and the 1.7% increase in health insurance. Mr. Wilson explained how this was achieved between the Compensation Study and average merits, noting that inflation was 6%. He confirmed that the Town's insurance was Local Choice and that Council in the future could discuss other alternatives if they desired. There was much discussion surrounding various events and whether they should fall under Tourism. Vice Mayor Sealock

suggested increasing the budget amount for National Night Out. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne confirmed that there were “behind the scenes” expenses such as clean up, staff presence (police, public works, energy services, etc.) at the events.

Mayor Cockrell gave an overview of the trolley funds and whether they should be placed under Tourism. She explained about the Economic Development Access Grant that the Town will more than likely have to pay back.

Councilwoman questioned grants for body worn camera. Chief Magalis advised that the grant in question came after the cameras were purchased.

Mr. Wilson advised that he will be coming back to Council in May for approval of a budget amendment for paving. Mayor Cockrell explained about the funding dilemma involving the 8th Street Bridge.

Council questioned what happened to the vehicles that reached over 100,000 miles. Mr. Wilson explained that they were put out for auction or used as extra vehicles for staff and the revenue placed in different line items. Council gave a shout out to the Town employees who take care of the Town vehicles, so they last longer.

Mr. Wilson explained that once the tax rate was advertised Council only has the ability to decrease what was advertised not increase.

Mayor Cockrell thanked Mr. Wilson, staff, and department heads for all their hard work on the budget and encouraged Council to contact Mr. Wilson with any questions regarding the budget.

ITEMS SLATED FOR THE CONSENT AGENDA AT THE MARCH 27TH REGULAR MEETING – Finance Director BJ Wilson gave an overview of A – D.

- A. Riverton Pump Station Engineering – No discussion by Council
- B. Professional Annual Auditing Services – Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned the additional programs listed for an additional charge. Mr. Wilson explained that if extra federal monies were received, they would be able to do the extra work which is considered special auditing.
- C. Various Single-Phase Pad-Mounted Transformers – No discussion by Council
- D. Three-Phase Pad-Mounted Transformers – No discussion by Council
- E. Resolution Approving Town’s Participation in Proposed Settlement of Opioid-Related Claims Against Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Distributors with Settlement Funds to be Used to Help Remediate Damages Caused by the Opioid Epidemic – Town Attorney George Sonnett gave an overview and explanation of this item noting that the Town does not get the money directly but was sent to Warren County for distribution. Lori gave a brief explanation of how this was started in 2021, noting the funds could not be for something already appropriated. She also noted that no towns in the Commonwealth will be receiving monies only counties and cities.
- F. Proclamation for Front Royal Karate Club 50th Anniversary Celebration – Mayor Cockrell asked for this item to be placed on the agenda since the celebration is on April 7, 2023. Council agreed to add to the March 27th Regular Meeting.

Addition to Agenda - “The Discussion and Consideration of a Text Amendment Change for Dynamic Life [Praise and Worship Center] for a proposed burial ground onsite [1600 John Marshall Highway]” Councilwoman Morris advised that she requested this item be added to the agenda due to it being a time sensitive manner, noting that language needed to be added to the Town Code. Director of Planning Lauren

Kopishke distributed a copy of the where the text amendments in the Town Code would occur. She noted this item would be scheduled to go to the Planning Commission first. She explained the advertising process for the public hearings required for both Planning Commission and Town Council. Councilman Ingram questioned and Ms Kopishke confirmed the definition of cemeteries and burial grounds. Ms Morris opined that approval of this request would have minimal impact to the community and that it was common for churches to have cemeteries onsite noting that water and sewer services were not needed.

There was much discussion about setbacks, how the neighbors would be affected and what the state code allowed. Ms. Kopishke advised that there were no performance standards in Town Code. Town Attorney George Sonnett read from Virginia State Code §57-26. Council asked that this item be added to the Planning Commission agenda and continue the process with Town Council. There was continued discussion about the timing of the advertisements and public hearings of both entities. Council agreed to dual advertising. Mr. Sonnett advised that cemeteries are only allowed in agriculture zoned areas. It was confirmed that if a text amendment was approved cemeteries would be allowed in R-3 zones.

STAFF RETREAT PREPARATION – Director of Public Works Robbie Boyer gave a presentation on various Public Works projects and distributed a handout. He went over the following projects: Riverton Pump Station, Influent Pump Station Upgrade at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, I & I Sanitary Sewer Repairs Project, I & I Manhole Rehabilitation Project, Pressure Reducing Vault (PRV) Replacements, Waterline Upgrades on various streets, Redundant Water Line Project, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Projects [N. Shenandoah Avenue Lighting, E. 8th Street Bridge Replacement, South Street Road Safety Improvements, E. Prospect Bridge Repairs & Deck Replacement, Happy Creek Road Phase 2]. Mr. Boyer then went over all districts and the breakdown of funding in each district. He concluded with the Primary and Secondary Paving Projects. There was much discussion about VDOT funding of streets specifically Smart Scale and 50/50 Revenue Sharing, noting that safety was the biggest factor in being approved for funding.

Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke gave an update on the Comprehensive Plan [Plan] by using the Implementation Matrix. She reminded Council that the Plan was a guiding document and gave a brief history of the Plan as well as a timeline on how the Plan came together along with the focus in the different areas of the Plan including: Small-Town Character, High-Quality Development, Tourism, Economic Sustainability, Transportation, Responsive & Accountable Governance, Reliable Utilities & Services, Public Health & Safety, Affordable Housing, Environmental Sustainability, and Development Policies. Councilwoman Morris voiced concern over the perception of affordable housing and that transportation was more than just driving around town, it was parking, curbing, ramps, etc. Mayor Cockrell explained the process of the many amendments that have happened over the course of time putting the Plan together.

OPEN DISCUSSION –

Mayor Cockrell reminded everyone of the retreat and for Council to get their questions in. She asked Council for their thoughts on the many Vape Shops in Town. There was much discussion on this issue with various ways the Town could assist by amending the Town Code with specific restrictions. Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke gave an explanation on the many shops currently in Town and noted that they were selling a product and the Town could not discriminate. She explained about the sign and flashing light restrictions that her department has control over through code enforcement.

It was confirmed that there was no cigarette tax in Town; however, the shops pay 35% in sales tax. It was noted that there were (13) currently in Town with (7) on South Street. The various restrictions that were suggested included: strengthen tobacco license, review license fees, reduce underage sale to youth, restrict

density, establish a cap of new ones based on population, policy for license revocation, restrict locating near schools, restrict the sale of drug paraphernalia, restrict hours of operation, tighten zoning regulations.

Mayor Cockrell noted that she wanted the public to be aware what powers Council had when it came to the establishment of vape shops. Council questioned at what point the Town regulated businesses. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned whether the businesses could be tied to the Comprehensive Plan. It was agreed to move the continued discussion of vape shops to a work session.

Councilman Rappaport questioned maintenance of an alley. Mayor Cockrell advised that she had placed the maintenance of alleys and rights of ways to a future work session. Mr. Rappaport asked that a Resolution be added to the March 27th agenda to recognize the Skyline High School Hawks Boys Varsity Basketball Team on their successful season. Council agreed to place on March 27th agenda. Town Attorney George Sonnett explained the difference between a proclamation and a resolution noting that moving forward with a proclamation was better to use for recognitions.

Councilman Rogers recognized Town Manager Joe Waltz for pulling information together quickly regarding the agreements with Downtown Front Royal and Warren County. He suggested inviting the Downtown Front Royal Board and their new Director to a work session to discuss tourism.

Councilwoman Morris suggested that staff look at allowing access to a cemetery on Guard Hill Road that was mentioned to her as being on Town Property. She explained that the family wanted to clean and preserve it, but a gate blocked access. Mr. Waltz voiced concern of security but will investigate.

Adjourned at 9:22pm

Approved by Town Council

3/27/23

Date: -----