



TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Monday, June 12, 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 for a limited time.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne moved seconded by Councilwoman Morris that Council appoint Town Manager Joseph Waltz as Clerk Pro Tempore for tonight's meeting June 12, 2023.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers DeDomenico-Payne, Ingram, Morris, Rappaport, Rogers, Sealock

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL by the Mayor

ROLL CALL BY CLERK PRO TEMPORE JOSEPH WALTZ

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

ABSENT: Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Joseph E. Waltz
 Town Attorney George M. Sonnett, Jr.
 Various members of the staff and public

Presentations:

A. Revitalization of Former Youth Center by Samantha Barber of Reaching Out NOW [RON]– Founder and President of RON Samantha Barber introduced Chairman of the Board/Director of Finance & Business Strategies and husband Joe Barber and Board Member/Secretary Sina May to Council. Packets of information were passed out to Council containing information about the organization and their proposal. Mrs. Barber gave a presentation "A Reimagined Student Union and Leadership Center – A space to safely connect, call their own, and rediscover their sense of belonging". The presentation included: 1) information about RON's mission, non-profit 501c3 status and the programs they offered (leadership, empowerment, service); 2) more in depth of their three programs; 3) Partnerships; 4) Challenges (isolation, responsibility, environment); 5) Goals - create a safe place with positive role-models and mentoring and where they can feel invested and have fun; 6) Community Leadership Support (law enforcement, Warren County Public Schools, School Administration); 7) Timeline; 8) Town and County Support (items and costs through the

end of 2025 from the Town totaling \$25,000[staffing] and \$25,000[equipment/furniture]); and 9) picture of plaque currently hanging on the former youth center building.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne noted that she had sent some questions to *RON* to be answered tonight. They included: 1) What is your revenue in previous years, what has your budget been like for the past few years and what primary sources of funding are there? 2) What is your experience managing budgets and personnel? 3) Who are you partnering with? 4) Do you have any state or national affiliations or services that provide oversight? 5) How did you come up with the request for two years of funding and what are your plans for non-local government sustainability? Ms. May advised that they were not able to work with students in the focus groups as planned due to the closing of the schools earlier than usual this year so they transitioned to speaking with parents and teachers, but they will continue researching on what the students would like to see in a youth center. Ms. May advised that along with their scholarships staff took the kids on bus trips and field trips. Mrs. Barber advised that she and her husband had extensive experience and background in finance and management. Ms. May explained their projected budget noting grass roots funding. She advised that they did not have any state or national affiliations or services that provided oversight reinforcing that they go strictly by what the community wants. She opined that it would take 18-24 months to build sustainable non-local government funding by getting support through existing relationships in the community and reaching out to additional businesses. She stated that with Council's support they would be able to set the groundwork and build something awesome for the kids. She advised that initial funding from the Town would go towards staff so there was someone there with the kids and that they would also be focused on security. Mrs. Barber opined that their vision is working together and getting buy-in from the public to get support for the vision they have.

Vice Mayor Sealock opined that the proposal was a great idea but recognized the amount of work.

Councilman Rappaport stated that some things never changed like isolation, responsibility, and environment and that every community needed a youth center which had been a void in Front Royal for many years. While he noted that churches have many events for the youth, a youth center is more global and brings people together from all walks of life.

Councilman Rogers advised that he grew up in a small town and that most communities had recreation departments always giving a place for kids to learn various activities and socialization. He agreed that a youth center was well overdue in Front Royal and felt like \$50,000 was "chump change" compared to the impact on the kids. He thanked members of *RON* for their involvement in the programs and said that he looked forward to the opening of the youth center.

Councilman Ingram advised *RON* that there were resources available to help cover some of the costs. Mayor Cockrell suggested that *RON* reach out to various groups in the area for donations of equipment and furniture. She felt sure that as their proposal was released to the public the community would want to help since it is an opportunity that would benefit the kids and the community, allowing a healthy place for kids to go.

Mrs. Cockrell reminded Council that tonight was for Council to hear information and decide what the next steps should be. She advised that they were currently at the end of one budget cycle and approved a new one that begins July 1st. She continued that if there was support from Council it would have to be determined where to find the money in the budget. She voiced concern that the kids living within the Town limits would have easier access and more direct benefits than those who lived outside the Town limits. Councilwoman Morris stated that due to the pandemic there was an entire generation that not only needed

to be engaged but brought out of isolation. She agreed with the Mayor that the budget was set and it would be difficult to go back and reallocate funds and/or find funding. She noted that there was a lot of information to dissect, and Council received it only a week ago. She suggested that the next step be for Council to work with staff on a solution. She voiced concern that other organizations would like money too and reminded *RON* that Warren County had a list of non-profits they supported and was within their budget to do so where the Town does not. She was adamant that Council justifies the taxpayers' expenses. Mrs. Barber advised that they were there to work together and listen. Mr. Rogers suggested that the Council and Finance Department do everything possible to find \$50,000 if there was a commitment to the youth.

Ms. DeDomenico-Payne suggested that *RON* speak with The Warren Coalition about their programs that were started recently, as well as the youth centers and boys/girls clubs in the Winchester area since they have had struggles. She urged them to learn from others. She voiced concern on what will make the at-risk youth come. Mr. Sealock opined that kids will come, and others will follow. Mr. Ingram reiterated the suggestion to reach out to other community service groups to talk with the students as well as reaching out to adults in leadership.

Mr. Rappaport noted that *RON* has proven they are capable. Ms. Morris agreed that they had proven their success and appreciated the work they had done and the families they had impacted; however, it was Council's turn to do the work and review the information given.

Mrs. Cockrell voiced concern about the 8th – 12th graders, especially when they begin driving, and suggested that maybe once a month 6th and 7th graders could attend, noting that the community does not get to them soon enough. She reiterated that Council would look over information and get back with them.

B. Speed Cameras by Randy Campbell of Blue Line Solutions and Approve Procure Speed Camera Enforcement Services in School Zones, FY24 Budget Amendment/Budget Transfer

Chief Magalis introduced Randy Campbell of Blue Line Solutions [Blue Line] noting he was retired from the Virginia State Police. Mr. Magalis advised that a speed study was conducted in the four school zones Skyline Middle School, Warren County Middle School, Ressie Jeffries Elementary School, and A.S. Rhodes Elementary School, noting the study included the percentage of vehicles who drove through these zones during various times in the mornings and afternoons and who were going over 10 miles an hour.

Councilman Rogers questioned the return on investment, how many tickets were given in the past and what the potential was with the cameras. Chief Magalis advised that the officer in the car cost money and the cameras were always there. Chief Magalis reminded Council that the purpose of the project was not the revenue but safety. Mayor Cockrell commented that there were kids in the cars who were going over the speed limit. Mr. Rogers suggested letting the community know how dramatic the numbers were.

Randy Campbell advised that Blue Line was owned and operated by retired law enforcement who could speak to safety. He continued by explaining the process: 1) kick off a 30-day customized public information campaign; 2) 30-day warning period; 3) go live meaning enforcement will begin; 4) citations processed; 5) Blue Line sends out the fines; 6) fines are paid to Blue Line as authorized in the Virginia State Code §46.2 not exceeding \$100 and considered a civil penalty where nothing goes on anyone's license or insurance; 7) proceeds go back to Front Royal. He explained that \$75.00 of every citation issued goes to Front Royal and \$25.00 goes to Blue Line for all processing fees. He further explained that Blue Line comes in and installs everything at zero cost to Front Royal and there were no lease fees.

Councilman Rappaport questioned the \$75,000 that Blue Line proposed as the cost of installation, infrastructure, development, and implementation of the camera system. Mr. Campbell confirmed that the Town was not billed for anything, and Blue Line was not worried about costs since they had many localities in Virginia and other states participating. He reiterated that there was zero risk but a ton of rewards from a safety perspective.

Chief Magalis suggested that funds could be applied to public safety like sidewalks or the most recently proposed Student Union. Mr. Rogers confirmed that there was no interest on the \$75.00 and \$25.00 collections.

Mr. Rogers questioned whether the cameras were preset for 10 miles an hour and above. Mr. Campbell advised that the cameras captured all the speeds and only those 11 miles an hour and above would be cited. It was noted that the Town could have a digital speed sign at each location at no extra cost. It was confirmed that a schedule would be developed to determine school holidays, snow days, etc. when the cameras will not be activated. Mr. Rogers voiced concerns that some drivers will be considered reckless. Mr. Campbell advised that they were legislative bound to the \$100.00.

Town Attorney George Sonnett advised that the “purchase” was under a cooperative procurement being vetted by Wythe County, Virginia and that he proposed to look through the contract in depth.

Town Manager Joe Waltz advised and confirmed that if Council approved on June 26th the camera system could be up and running by early November. Council agreed to place on the June 26th agenda.

Old Business

A. Update from NVR – Saddle Crest for a Rezoning Application Amendment of the Town Zoning map to Reclassify Approximately 43.9 Acres from Estate Residential District R-E to Residential District R1A

Lauren reminded Council that this was a rezoning application amendment to the Town Zoning Map to reclassify approximately 43.9 acres from Estate Residential (R-E) to Residential District (R1A). She noted that NVR had submitted a revised set of proffers and a second concept plan for Council to review.

Councilman Rappaport questioned the land dedication for the east/west connector road from adjoining property owners. Councilwoman Morris was under the impression that the other landowners were in discussions with the developer about their portion of the road that would cross their land but noted that there has not been any updates and landowners could do what they pleased with their property with it being no fault of NVR.

Vice Mayor Sealock confirmed that if the east/west connector road was not completed there would not be a second entrance. Ty Lawson from NVR advised that there would only be one entrance at Shenandoah Shores Road but would be wide enough. He confirmed that they plan to begin the east/west connector road as part of their development. Ms. Morris advised that the other property owners must be willing to “play ball”. Mayor Cockrell thanked NVR for helping with the road but noted that no one can predict what someone else was going to do. Mr. Lawson advised that the adjoining landowner(s) have all the documents to make a decision and NVR had addressed issues the best they could but stated that they [landowners] were just not ready to make a decision. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned the proffers. It was confirmed that the proffers run with the land and one landowner has not done anything.

Mr. Lawson of NVR advised that they were ready to have a public hearing. Council agreed to advertise for a public hearing on July 24th.

Mr. Rappaport voiced concern on improving the intersection at Happy Creek Road and Shenandoah Shores Road by a possible flyover. Mr. Lawson advised that he was not aware of any funding available for a flyover.

Discussions

A. Request to Vacate a Portion of an Unimproved Alley and North Street Extended South of the Intersection of North Street and Orchard Street from Jay McCarty

Town Manager Joe Waltz read the summary: *The applicant is requesting the vacation of 13,001 square feet of North Street Extended terminus south of the intersection of North Street and Orchard Street and a portion of unimproved alley adjacent to the southern property boundary. Public Works and Energy Services do not have comments or concerns. Planning Staff comments that these alleys provide a mechanism for future utility extension without demolishing streets. The next steps in the vacation process:*

Advertise for a public hearing and notify the abutting property owners of the hearing.

- *Council may deny the application.*
- *Council may postpone action and appoint viewers to view the public right of way.*
- *Council may pursue the sale with a 2nd public hearing.*
- *Council may discuss in a closed before the next public hearing on the sale price.*
- *Council approves the sale by ordinance at a previously negotiated price during 2nd public hearing.*

Councilwoman Morris suggested that for transparency and consistency's sake Council appoint a Viewing Committee before the public hearing so the information would be available. Councilman Ingram agreed.

Mayor Cockrell confirmed that the adjoining property owners would be notified first and maybe have the Viewing Committee in place during the 30-day period. Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke advised that there were no comments from the Planning Department other than underground infrastructure may be needed in the future in the area of the proposed vacation. Councilman Rogers advised that he was concerned and interested in input from the community as well as Ms. Kopishke's comment about underground infrastructure in the future. Councilman Rappaport agreed.

Mayor Cockrell advised staff to advertise for a public hearing for July 24th and notify property owners and at same time appoint a Viewing Committee. Mr. Waltz and Town Attorney George Sonnett advised what the Viewing Committee's job was.

B. Urban Agriculture – Bees, Chickens and Rabbits

Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke advised that Town Code currently required a permit for the keeping of bees, chickens, or rabbits on less than an acre in Town limits. She gave an overview of the process staff goes through for approval. She advised that there were close to sixty (60) urban agriculture permits in the system that required annual inspections. She asked for guidance from Council on what they wanted. She recommended the following: 1) not going over ten (10) chickens; 2) increase setbacks or 3) increase square footage per chicken.

Mayor Cockrell noted that she understood why people had concerns based on her own experiences with neighbors. Councilwoman Morris advised that Front Royal was a rural town with record high inflation. She noted that urban agriculture was trendy, and people were seeking their own chickens for eggs. She suggested changing the Town Code based on lot size. Councilman Rogers agreed. Councilman Rappaport

believed Front Royal was more urban because of tight density and favored the Blacksburg Ordinance placed in the packet.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned whether the public was receiving education about urban agriculture. Ms. Kopishke advised that when Management Plans are received by applicants, they are guided at that time especially making sure they are not a nuisance. She added that chickens cannot be butchered in the yard and roosters are not allowed.

Council agreed to increase number of chickens based on square footage with no comments on bees or rabbits and to come back to the August 7th work session. Ms. Kopishke advised that there needed to be a referral to the Planning Commission to take up a text amendment in Chapter 175. Town Manager Waltz advised that it would be back August 7th with referral to the Planning Commission and formal approval at the August Regular Meeting and a Public Hearing to amend Town Code in September.

Items Slated for Consent Agenda on June 26th

A. Resolution for Town of Front Royal Employee Appreciation Week - Town Manager Joe Waltz gave an overview and advised that he would be updating the resolution for approval on June 26th.

B. Sole Source Traffic Signal Camera Detection System Replacement at N. Shenandoah Avenue/14th Street Intersection – Purchasing Manager Michelle Campbell gave a brief overview of the purchase of the traffic signal camera detection replacement. Mr. Waltz confirmed that there would be capability of a sensor but would not be activated. Councilman Rogers voiced concern about being locked into a particular manufacturer and to keep this in mind moving forward. Council agreed to place under Consent Agenda on June 26th.

C. Sole Source Traffic Signal Cabinet Replacement at S. Royal Avenue/Criser Road Intersection - Ms. Campbell gave a brief overview of the purchase of a traffic signal cabinet replacement. Council agreed to place under the Consent Agenda on June 26th.

D. Sole Source for Turbidimeters and Controller Water Analysis Equipment for Water Plant - Ms. Campbell gave an overview of the purchase of turbidimeters and controller water analysis equipment. It was noted that they were the only company who sold and repaired the equipment. There was discussion about upgrading equipment versus purchasing parts for existing equipment. Council agreed to place under Consent Agenda on June 26th.

E. Receive Donation of Used Tasers from Loudoun County Sheriff's Office - Chief Magalis advised Council that he had six (6) functional tasers in the Police Department and was attempting to replace them with the donation from Loudoun County Sheriff's Office as they were going to a different model. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned whether they were being tested as to their working order. Chief Magalis advised that there would be some better than others, but it would help to get the department through for the next few years. Mr. Waltz advised that the tasers were currently in the Town's possession but would not be used until after Council's approval. Council agreed to add to the Consent Agenda on June 26th.

F. Receive Donation of Police Bicycles from Winchester Police Department

Chief Magalis advised that the Police Department currently had three (3) bikes that were 25 years old, noting they were good bikes but just old and heavy. The donated bikes from Winchester Police Department were about 10 years old. Council agreed to add to the Consent Agenda on June 26th.

