



TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Monday, July 10, 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.

Roll Call by Clerk of Council

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

ABSENT: Councilwoman Melissa DeDomenico-Payne

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

CLOSED MEETING

Councilwoman Morris moved seconded by Vice Mayor Sealock that Town Council convene a closed meeting, pursuant to Sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, for the following purpose: 1) pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion, consideration, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body, more specifically, Town Manager and appointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals, and, 2) pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) of the Code of Virginia, for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, more specifically, 1999 Front Royal-Warren County Voluntary Settlement Agreement, as amended.

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

ROLL CALL

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Councilwoman Morris 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 – Councilmembers Ingram, Morris, Rappaport, Rogers, Vice Mayor Sealock

No – N/A

Absent – Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Update on Tourism and Future Direction – Community Development & Tourism Manager Lizi Lewis passed out a map of various locations and destinations in the Front Royal/Warren County area. She then gave a presentation “Front Royal Tourism – July 2023 Update”, that included: The Plan; Visitor Center Fast Facts; Partnership Leverage; Visitor Center Activations; New Marketing Logo/Tagline; Merchandise Mockups; Visitor Center Merchandise; Outreach; Segment Targeting (day trippers & motorcycle tourism); Communication (external & internal); Target Markets (51-250 miles); Main Street Eats; New Info Maps. Council thanked Ms. Lewis on a job well done.

Old Business

A. Continued Discussion of Revitalization of Former Youth Center – Mayor Cockrell asked whether any members of *Reaching out Now (RON)* wanted to speak. In attendance were Sina May, Marlena Conner, Jennifer DeHaven and Robert Hupman. They chose to be available for questions. Mayor Cockrell referred to Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne’s questions and concerns that were previously emailed to each member of Council since she could not attend tonight’s meeting. She confirmed with the RON members that the amount being requested had increased from \$50,000 for (2) years to \$125,000 for (2 ½) years. Ms. May explained that after further review of the budget and timeline the increase was necessary. Mayor Cockrell also confirmed that \$25,000 was being requested now and \$50,000 in January 2024 for a total of \$75,000, noting that the Town’s budget had already been set for this fiscal year.

Mayor Cockrell explained that Council did not fund non-profits but suggested that this could be considered as a pilot project by granting seed money with the hopes of a revenue stream for them in a few years. She voiced concern that if this project were to move forward how would Council handle the next group that requested funding for their project. She hoped to find a way to make this work but not set a precedent.

Mayor Cockrell confirmed that the program would welcome all students including those from R-MA, private and home schooled. Ms. Conner and Mr. Hupman gave a brief update on the programs being offered and reiterated that it would be open to anyone who was able to use it not just those students in public schools. Mrs. Cockrell noted that she would like to see more input from the students to make sure they were going to use the programs and facility. She voiced concern that 8th – 12th graders would not be attending once they received their driver’s license and suggested opening it up to 6th and 7th graders during special events and activities. Ms. May advised that there have been discussions about incorporating events for the younger students.

Each of the four board members introduced themselves and gave a brief history of how they became involved with *Reaching Out Now*. Ms. Conner advised that the students would lead the youth center and have the ideas, noting that the buy-in would come from the students. Ms. May advised that there was a relationship with the schools for assistance in various activities such as art and building furniture. Ms. Conner advised that she had reached out to R-MA and they were interested. Mayor Cockrell suggested a presentation from RON to help educate the public on this project. Councilman Rogers looked forward to the day the youth center opened and to see the impact.

Councilman Rappaport confirmed the funding RON was asking for and questioned whether \$25,000 bi-annually prorated for 6 months would work. Ms. May advised that they were open to any discussions. She confirmed that they were going to institute minimal membership dues and that security camera installation was the most important item before the doors could open. Mayor Cockrell confirmed that the Town's contribution would be for staffing, games, and electronic costs. Ms. May reiterated that security was first and foremost. Mrs. Cockrell voiced concern that security was part of the building and Town funds should not go towards the building since it belonged to the County.

Councilman Rappaport confirmed that the timeline changed because of sewer work in the building as well as asbestos in the flooring and mold issues pushing the timeline to possibly the first of the year.

Councilwoman Morris thanked RON members for attending and advised that Council would give staff direction on a possible memorandum of agreement (MOA), budget amendment and public hearing to receive public input. She noted that as councilmember she was to validate and justify expenses to the Town taxpayers. Town Attorney George Sonnet's agreed that Ms. May could begin the process of writing the MOA. Mrs. Cockrell noted that Council needed to hear Town citizens say they wanted Council to do this and support it. Councilman Ingram advised that the quote of \$12,000 a year for the video surveillance was high but the initial costs were matching. He advised that there were grants for nonprofits. Ms. May advised that it was an educated guess and that they were looking at other vendors.

Ms. Morris advised that school begins August 9th and there were some "behind the scenes" that needed to be worked out.

Council agreed to a public hearing to receive public input on this item on August 28th.

Items Slated for Public Hearings on August 28th

A. Comprehensive Plan [Comp Plan] – Planning Director Lauren Kopishke gave a presentation "Town of Front Royal Comprehensive Plan Update" that included: What is a Comp Plan and is it a Law?; Purpose; Why is it Important; When was the Last Time the Town Comp Plan was Adopted; What is a Comp Plan; Process; Rewrite Process; Key Milestones; Comp Plan Organization; Vision/Big Ideas/Core Topics; Small Town Character; Future Land Use Map; Planning Areas; North East Planning Area; Next Steps: Subdivision & Zoning Ordinance Rewrite. It was noted that the Town Code would be amended once the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances were ready. Ms. Kopishke explained the mixed-use zoning and how it was easier to redevelop in the future. Ms. Kopishke advised that the Comp Plan would be reviewed and possibly revised every five years. Mayor Cockrell advised that she would send Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne's comments to Ms. Kopishke.

Council agreed to advertise for a public hearing on August 28th.

B. Rezoning, Ramsey Inc – Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke advised that Ramsey Inc was requesting an amendment of the Zoning Map to reclassify a portion of his parcel from Commercial District C-3 to Residential District R-2, noting that C-3 excludes residential uses. She explained that the purpose of the rezoning request was to allow for the construction of a multi-family structure, noting that the applicant currently had approval for a lodging house but that would be revoked if the rezoning was approved. The Planning Commission recommended approval and the proposed Comp Plan would support it. She advised that this was a portion of a larger parcel that was located in the County.

Vice Mayor Sealock questioned access to the Town's pumping station. Ms. Kopishke advised that it was being worked on and final approval would not be made until access was resolved.

Councilman Rappaport confirmed that the structure would not face Guard Hill Road and indicated that it was spot zoning. Town Attorney George Sonnett advised that spot zoning was discussed during the Planning Commission meeting, noting that it was out of character with surrounding zones. Ms. Kopishke agreed that the remainder of the parcel located in the County was agriculture. Councilman Ingram agreed that it was spot zoning and questioned how it was determined when the boundary line adjustment was approved. Mr. Rappaport questioned the maintenance of the road from Guard Hill Road. Mr. Sonnett reiterated that access was an issue and would have to be resolved.

Council agreed to advertise for a public hearing on August 28th.

C. Ordinance Amendment to Town Code Chapter 75 Pertaining to Transient Occupancy Tax – Director of Finance BJ Wilson advised that the amendment to Chapter 75 was allowed pursuant to state code revisions.

Council agreed to advertise for a public hearing on August 28th.

Consent Agenda Items for July 24th

A. Bid Award for Curb & Gutter Installation – Director of Finance BJ Wilson advised that Arthur Construction was the lowest bidder, and it was budgeted. He advised the streets that would be receiving the installation were Braxton, Manassas, & a 50/50 on Marshall.

B. FY24 Budget Amendment to Accept Funds from VRSA for Pavilion Damage – Mr. Wilson explained that the budget amendment was for reimbursement from Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA) for damage to the pavilion on Main Street. Town Manager Joe Waltz advised that he would provide Council with an update on the schedule once he received it.

C. Comprehensive Solid Waste Utility Cost of Service Fee/Rate Study Contract and FY24 Budget Amendment – Mr. Wilson advised that Council was to award a contract to Mid-Atlantic Solid Waste Consultant and approve a FY24 Budget Amendment. He advised that the solid waste ordinance in the Town Code had not been updated in many years. He confirmed that Mid-Atlantic was not a potential vendor.

New Business

A. Liaison Committee Meeting Items for July 20th Meeting – Council agreed to all the items listed in the packet and included three more. The following items were agreed upon: Revision to the Liaison Committee Policy; Delay of Mailing of Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Bills the last Five Years; Citizen Appointments to the Front Royal/Warren County Joint Towing Advisory Board; Discussion of Revitalization of Former Youth Center; Update on Tourism; School Zone Speeding and Enforcement; Update on Comprehensive Plans; Update on Progress of Avtex Conservancy and Update from Transportation Ad Hoc Committee. Vice Mayor Sealock is slated to attend the meeting with the Mayor.

Adjourned meeting at 9:52pm

Approved by Town Council

Date: 7/24/23