

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL WORK SESSION OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE
AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEES HELD IN THE COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM
ON MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2022, AT 4:00 P.M.**

Persons present: Mayor Beth A. Taylor, Vice-Mayor Cathy D. Pattison, Councilman Mark J. Bloomfield, Councilwoman Holly E. Atkins, Councilman Gary L. Gillman, Town Manager T. Brian Freeman, Assistant Town Manager Elaine R. Holeton, Town Clerk Sherry G. Corvin, Town Attorney Michelle Workman Clayton, Police Officer Chastity Russell

Persons absent: None

The following topics were discussed at the Work Session:

1. Town Manager Freeman thanked Assistant Town Manager Holeton and Town staff for overseeing the last Work Session and meeting with the Committee members in his absence.
2. Councilman Gillman stated that he received a complaint regarding the erosion of the creek bank on Ridge Road. He explained that the complainant noted that the stormwater detention ponds that serve the Food Lion property on North Fourth Street were dry during the last rain event, and it appears that they are not working correctly. Town Manager Freeman noted that he will check to see if the Town has any engineering plans for those ponds, and they would have to be observed during a rain event. Councilwoman Atkins advised that she, likewise, received a previous complaint about this matter. She inquired if anyone reached out to Mr. H. S. Ingo. Town Manager Freeman noted that he worked on this issue for about 18 months. Councilman Gillman advised that he checked into this matter, and all the property owners would not grant the Town an easement to work on this problem. He noted that he reached out to Mr. Ingo and followed up. After further discussion, Town Manager Freeman indicated that he would contact Mr. Ingo about this issue.
3. Councilwoman Atkins stated that she would like to thank whoever picked up the debris behind the former King's Produce building. Town Manager Freeman stated that Mr. Faraci had the debris picked up. Councilwoman Atkins noted that there remains a small amount of debris in the back corner that needs to be cleaned up.
4. Councilwoman Atkins inquired how people/organizations who rent rooms at the Meeting Center can request, for example, an American flag to be placed in the rented room. Discussion was held that the person/organization renting the room could be asked on the application if they would like to have a flag provided for their room. Town Manager Freeman stated that he will check with Director of Public Information/Tourism Jude about making this change on the rental application.
5. Councilwoman Atkins inquired if the Kiwanis Club met the 60 day application guideline when they applied for their 5K Run permit. Town Clerk Corvin advised that the Kiwanis Club did not meet this stipulation, however, the Safety and Events Committee worked with them to approve their application so it could be considered for approval by the Town Council. Assistant Town Manager Holeton explained that the Kiwanis Club had applied in the past for this type of event, so the Safety and Events Committee was comfortable with approving their application, and the Town will be letting the applicants know of the strict, new policy that may begin in January 2023 about application deadlines, etc. She noted that the Safety and Events Committee is still working on the new proposed guidelines, but

the Town will be informing applicants about the new stricter guidelines once they are finalized.

6. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about the status of possibly allowing full time or part time employees work in different departments to acquire more work hours and to help out in departments where needed. Town Manager Freeman commented that the Town has reached out to its auditors and the Local Government Attorneys Association about this matter. A discussion was held regarding this causing overtime for current full time employees and how the overtime wages would be calculated. Town Manager Freeman pointed out that it is not a good economic practice to pay a current Town employee overtime to work in a position that would normally pay less wages. He advised that Town staff is still working on the legality of doing this, etc. He noted that he will report back to the Council once Town staff has received more information about this issue.
7. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about the status of the Police Department using part time officers to help provide the needed personnel. Town Manager Freeman commented that Chief Hash has received a policy from another locality that he is reviewing. He noted that Chief Hash has some concerns with using part time officers. He noted that once all the new officers are trained, the Police Department will have more trained officers than ever before, and he advised that he thinks there will be a total of 29 officers. Councilwoman Atkins noted that she had requested information about the scheduling of employees for the Police Department. Town Manager Freeman presented Councilwoman Atkins with a large notebook of scheduling information that she had requested. Councilwoman Atkins explained that she asked for this information because she was concerned that possibly there were only a few officers on a shift trying to cover the entire town, and she was concerned about safety. Further discussion was held on the staffing at the Police Department.
8. Mayor Taylor advised that a citizen had inquired if the Town could place a sign at each end of the town noting the upcoming events. She stated that the citizen was concerned because the Recreation Center sign located in Withers Park had not been changed and kept up to date.
9. Mayor Taylor stated that she received a concern that the Town is not removing the snow from the sidewalk in front of the Post Office on Main Street. She noted that possibly, the Public Works Committee could discuss this matter. Town Manager Freeman presented the Town Code regarding this matter, and he explained that Town staff should be clearing the sidewalk in front of the Post Office and to 6th Street. A brief discussion was held regarding the responsibility of business owners to remove snow from the sidewalks in front of their businesses, except for business owners in the downtown area. He advised that he would discuss this matter with Director of Public Works Peoples to ensure that the snow is removed from the sidewalk in front of the Post Office to 6th Street.
10. Mayor Taylor informed the Committee members that after the 2022-23 budget is adopted, she will be switching the Council members serving on the Public Works Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee. She noted that once the 2022-23 budget is adopted, Councilman Bloomfield and Councilwoman Atkins will serve on the Public Works Committee, and Vice-Mayor Pattison and Councilman Gillman will serve on the Budget and Finance Committee. Mayor Taylor noted that once the new election is held and Council members are seated in January 2023, the members serving on these Committees could be changed.

11. Vice-Mayor Pattison noted that she would like for Town management and staff to initiate heavily enforcing the Criminal Blight Ordinance. Town Attorney Clayton advised that Town staff will follow the Virginia Code and the Town Code on this issue. She briefly explained the process of how the Town can enforce the Criminal Blight Ordinance for any hotel or properties in Town that are violating the ordinance. Town Manager Freeman advised that the Police Department is compiling a list of properties to be considered for violation of the Criminal Blight Ordinance. Further discussion was held on this matter, and Town Manager Freeman indicated that the Town may send out a warning letter to those property owners who are in violation of the Criminal Blight Ordinance to let them know that the Town will be enforcing it.
12. Town Manager Freeman presented Ordinance No. 1409, an ordinance moving the East Wytheville Voting Precinct and Polling Place to Spiller Elementary School. Town Attorney Clayton advised that Wythe County has already adopted an ordinance moving the East Wytheville Voting Precinct and Polling Place to Spiller Elementary School. She explained that the move was due to the primary elections being held at the same time as the Chautauqua Festival. Town Clerk Corvin stated that action on this ordinance will be taken during the regular meeting of the Town Council following this Work Session.
13. Town Manager Freeman presented proposed changes to the Town's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policy. He explained that the main change is regarding the Town charging actual costs for any FOIA request that takes longer than two hours to fulfill. Discussion was held on the proposed changes and the FOIA Policy, as well as the large FOIA requests that have been received. The Committee discussed the Town's current policy and the costs that the Town can charge for when a FOIA request is made. The Committee then held a brief discussion about who approves and signs the appropriate form for Town Manager salary increases, and how it has been handled previously. Town Attorney Clayton pointed out that the Town is having a Salary and Compensation Study done, so this would be a good time to review this matter. Town Manager Freeman advised that he would ask Davenport & Company, LLC, about this matter. A motion was made by Councilman Bloomfield and seconded by Councilman Gillman to approve the proposed changes to the Town's FOIA Policy. Mayor Taylor inquired if there is any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting results, by a roll call vote: For: Beth A. Taylor, Cathy D. Pattison, Mark J. Bloomfield, Gary L. Gillman. Against: Holly E. Atkins.
14. Councilman Bloomfield noted that the Budget and Finance Committee met last week regarding the budget, and the Committee is scheduled to meet again tomorrow, Tuesday, April 26, 2022, at 3:30 p.m. He explained that the budget will be in a deficit. He noted that the Budget and Finance Committee will suggest that the Town employees be given a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase. He continued to explain that the Town Council will need to have a long term plan regarding the budget so there will not be deficits. Discussion continued on the budget, and the Compensation Study being performed by Davenport & Company, LLC. Town Manager Freeman explained that Davenport & Company, LLC, will take a holistic review of the Town's budget. Discussion continued on the budget and the various departments that collect revenue for the services provided to help offset the operations expenses incurred by the departments. A brief dialogue was also held on the Fire & Rescue Department using part time employees. Councilwoman Atkins noted that the Police Department should consider using part time employees, as well. Town Manager Freeman remarked that he will discuss this matter with Police Chief Hash, and they will review the example policy that Chief Hash obtained about using part time police officers. Town Manager Freeman noted that the Budget and Finance Committee discussed a COLA increase and a Christmas bonus for employees. He noted that the Budget and

Finance Committee will continue to discuss the Christmas bonus before making a recommendation to the Town Council. Further discussion was held on the budget.

15. Mayor Taylor reminded the Committee members of the Town's Arbor Day Celebration scheduled for Friday, April 29, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the HOPE Ministry Center on Main Street. She invited all the Committee members to attend.
16. Town Attorney Clayton stated that she will send the Committee members a listing of projects that she is currently working on for the Town.
17. Town Manager Freeman noted that the May meeting calendar is attached to the meeting package. Town Clerk Corvin pointed out that Monday, May 30, is Memorial Day, and it would be the date for the regularly scheduled Joint Governing Bodies meeting, but it may be canceled due to the Memorial Day holiday.
18. Councilman Bloomfield advised that he received an email from Director of Museums Emerson, and the Department of Museums has a lot of activities scheduled before the end of the year. Mayor Taylor advised that the Town hired a person to oversee the children's education program. A brief discussion was also held on the interviews being conducted for the Director of Museums position due to the pending retirement of Frances Emerson.
19. Councilwoman Atkins inquired about filling the Director of Parks and Recreation position. Town Manager Freeman noted that the position has been posted, and the Town has received some applications that will soon be reviewed.
20. Town Manager Freeman noted that there will be a Housing Committee meeting next week on May 3, 2022, at 3:30 p.m.
21. Councilman Bloomfield inquired if the Town has received any updates on the 300 unit housing development proposed by Mr. James Crockett, III. Town Manager Freeman noted that the developer's engineer is working on the site plan, and they should soon be sent to the Town for review.

There being no further business, the Work Session was adjourned. (5:24 p.m.)

T. Brian Freeman, Town Manager

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk