



Roll Call by Clerk of Council

PRESENT: Mayor Lori A. Cockrell
Vice Mayor R. Wayne Sealock
Councilman Joshua L. Ingram
Councilman H. Bruce Rappaport
Councilwoman Melissa DeDomenico-Payne
Councilman Glenn E. Wood

ABSENT: Councilwoman Amber F. Morris

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

Councilwoman De-Domenico-Payne moved seconded by Vice Mayor Sealock That Council delete item 4C – Alley Vacation on 7th Street Viewing Committee Report from the agenda.

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

No – N/A

Absent – Councilwoman Morris

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Consent Agenda Items for March 25th

A. Uniform Contract – Finance Director BJ Wilson advised that this five-year contract exceeded \$50,000 and therefore must be approved by Council. He explained that the new contract would combine three service agreements into one, saving the Town \$13,803.82. Council agreed to add to the Consent Agenda for March 25th for formal approval.

New Business

A. ACES Appalachian Trail Head Project – Member of ACES Justin Proctor gave a presentation Front Royal's Advisory Committee for Environmental Sustainability (ACES) AT Connector Trail Feasibility Study. He explained that the proposed Appalachian Connector Trail (AT) was a three-mile mulch path used for foot traffic only creating safe pedestrian access to and from the AT and Front Royal. He touched on the increase of pedestrian fatalities in Virginia in 2022. He noted that the Town's new Comprehensive Plan included environmental access and sustainability. Mr. Proctor stated the stakeholders for the trail effort included the Town, County, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Smithsonian, Shenandoah National Park, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC), Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), Appalachian Trail Division of National Park Service (APPA), Warren County-Front Royal Appalachian Trail Community (WFRAT) and private landowners. He advised that Ironwood Outdoors, Inc had agreed to perform a Feasibility Study and the Town was being asked to fund the study at a cost of \$8,200. He explained the importance of hiring a trail building company for the study noting Ironwood Outdoors, Inc. completed many trails including the *Andrea Family Wellness & Recreation Trail* located behind Warren Memorial Hospital. He gave an overview of the Scope of Work confirming that \$1,500 would be due upon execution of the agreement reflecting as a credit on the final billing statement. Mr. Proctor recapped that if the Town were to cover the cost of the Feasibility Study performed by Ironwood Outdoors, Inc., it would kick start the next phase of the project and show the Town's commitment to improving pedestrian safety access around the community as



stressed in the Comprehensive Plan, and that all additional fundraising for the project would be led by ACES and partner groups targeting Virginia TAP (Transition Assistance Program) funding and local grants.

Mayor Cockrell questioned why the Town was the only one being asked to fund the full amount for the Feasibility Study. Mr. Proctor answered that ACES was a Town Advisory Committee created to carry out objectives similar to this project. Director of Public Works advised that the Town Corporate limits ended at Aquaduct Lane.

Councilman Wood questioned how many individuals came off the trail. Community Development and Tourism Director Lizi Lewis advised that over 1,000 checked in at base camp last year. Mr. Proctor advised that while the trolley picked up hikers at the trail head its times were limited.

Mayor Cockrell confirmed that the Feasibility Study would determine if the project was feasible and if it was, would include an estimated cost to make it happen. Mr. Proctor stressed that grants could not be applied for without the Feasibility Study. Mayor Cockrell questioned whether private landowners were aware of the proposal to purchase and or ask for an easement of their land and whether ACES was aware of the costs associated with these acquisitions. Mr. Proctor advised that funds for acquisition could be obtained through the grants.

Councilman Wood questioned placing flashing crossings for the pedestrians. Mr. Proctor advised that talks with VDOT had begun that included pushing back brush, flashing lights on both sides of the street and a petition was being proposed to drop the speed limit to bring attention to the trail.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned the timeline. Mr. Proctor was not sure since the Feasibility Study needed to get underway.

Councilman Rappaport stated that the Town would benefit from this project and would like to see it completed. He questioned the \$1,500 due upon execution of the agreement. Mr. Proctor advised that there was a willingness to work with the Town.

Councilman Ingram questioned whether the project would connect into the *Royal Shenandoah Greenway*. Mr. Proctor advised that it would connect to the Greenway at Criser Road behind Stevie Lockhart Construction.

Mayor Cockrell referred to items (A-F) that were the responsibility of ACES as stated in the letter from Ironwood Outdoors, Inc dated February 16, 2024. Mr. Proctor reiterated that fundraising along with grants would assist with the costs once the Feasibility Study was completed.

Town Manager Joe Waltz advised that Council could take action on the allocation of \$8,200 on March 25th if they so desired or continue discussion until the April 1st work session. He noted that the monies would come from this year's budget therefore a budget amendment would need to be acted upon. Council agreed to bring back on April 1st to allow staff to pursue alternatives in this year's budget.

B. Water Supply Plan – Town Manager Joe Waltz advised that Town Code Chapter 134.1.C. stated that the Town will annually determine anticipated excess volume of water and sewer available for residential, commercial or industrial use. He introduced Stephen Steel from CHA Consulting, Inc. who gave a presentation Front Royal – Excess Volume Determination. Mr. Steel began with reiterating and stating Town



Code Section 134.1.C. noting that the Town Code established excess volume as the current and projected volume required by the Town subtracted from the current permitted plant capabilities and required all utility extensions to include detailed information demonstrating no impact to existing users and that all construction will meet established Town standards. He stated that his report takes the approach that “excess volume” referred to capacity available for future development. Mr. Steele summarized that they were “gauging the health of the Town’s system”.

He continued with a table showing **Water System Volume Available Capacity** identifying the various elements at the Raw Water Intake/Pump Station, Water Treatment Plant, Guard Hill Pump Station, Future Manassas Avenue Pump Station, Jamestown Pump Station, 4-H Pump Station and Water Treatment Plant Pressure Zone Distribution System. Mr. Steel asked Council whether 870,000 gallons a day was enough or were they looking for more based on future needs. Mr. Waltz questioned whether by-right home builds were taken into account. Mr. Steel advised that it was actual metered flow that currently leaves the plant not anticipated development. Mr. Steel confirmed that the report was not a future exercise only what is currently being sent to the system over the course of the last three years.

Mr. Steel continued with **Sewer System Volume Available Capacity** identifying the various elements at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Riverton Pump Station, Crooked Run Pump Station, Kelly Industrial Park Pump Station, Stevens Pump Station, Happy Creek #1 Pump Station, Happy Creek #2 Pump Station and IT Federal Pump Station. He noted that the report looked at pump stations getting upgrades with 4.8 MGD if pump stations could pump to the system. He recapped that it was 870,000 gallons a day for water and 480,000 gallons a day for sewer. He noted that the health of the sewer system was getting better and gave a “shout out” to Council for funding the I & I (Inflow and Infiltration) since real results can be seen the last two years by freeing up capacity and no overflow.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned the IT Federal Pump Station. It was confirmed that it was ready, however there was no growth in the area. Mr. Steele then showed maps of the existing sanitary sewer system and water distribution system that “tells the story” of the pump stations and the highest sources of I & I. He questioned what the cost would be to fix the pipes in Riverton area versus building pump station. He voiced concern on getting the rainwater out of the community.

Councilman Rappaport questioned the flow on the east side of 522 versus the west side. Mr. Steele advised that flow monitoring was affected by dry weather or when the water tables were low. Director of Public Works Robbie Boyer advised that part of Viscose City, Catlett Mountain, S. Shenandoah Avenue and Crooked Run were also in the Riverton area noting pipes cross the river.

Mayor Cockrell voiced concern that the Happy Creek Road area did not have capacity right now which was the area developers were interested in. Mr. Steel reiterated the importance of the Volume Determination Report being completed every year so that Council would know the health of the system and comfortably plan for development.

Council recognized two issues: 1) might have a pump station that needed attention in Riverton and 2) developers wants to go to Happy Creek area. Councilman Ingram advised that the information tonight would be good to share with the Front Royal Warren County Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.



C. Community Development Update – Community Development/Tourism Director Lizi Lewis gave a presentation Community Development Update beginning with passing around items currently for sale at the Visitors Center. She continued with **2023 Reflections** that identified a rebranding tagline/logo, resuming 7-day a week operation, relaunching the gift shop, renewing partnerships, visitor statistics through the visitor center and Front Royal/Warren County location. Ms. Lewis showed graphs of **Downtown Front Royal (E. Main Street) and Dickey Ridge Visitor Center visits** by origin, in person, top 10 counties and top 10 cross visits. She gave an update on **Social Media Statistics, Website Updates and Statistics** that included number of visits and a refresh design in 2024 that will include new mapping and a new calendar look. She continued with **2024 Direction** including updated visitors guide in all (76) Certified Tourist Information Centers, refreshing the website, exploring technology tools for data, upgrading technology inside the Visitors Center and a mobile and FP video project. She advised that ARPA **Grant Funding** of \$42,500 would be used for the purchase of digital touch screens and a photo booth for the Visitors Center, **Our Name in Ink** identified ads for Front Royal in *Blue Ridge Outdoors* magazine and *VIRGINIA* magazine marketing, noting that the magazines were free, published three times a year and available at the Visitors Center. She explained the **Welcome Center Takeover** noting the partnership with the County to visit the welcome centers in Clearbrook and Ruther Glenn during the months of April and October. Ms. Lewis identified the **2024 Town Events** that included major tourist events and others, the **Trolley Update** that included adding the Smithsonian as a stop during the AT crossing season (April 1 – October 31), a new trolley track website, an update on ridership and noted that the fare was still FREE. The presentation concluded with an update on **FREDA** that included the adoption of a Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Goal Themes, and a signed MOU.

Councilman Rappaport questioned where people were from that visited the website. Ms. Lewis advised that she could get back with him on a number.

Councilman Ingram suggested implementing a Ghost Tour.

Councilman Wood questioned whether there were any discussions to increase green spaces around Town.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne noted there were a lot of celebrities that had either grew up, lived, or passed by Front Royal. Some of those names included (Tina Turner, Warren Beatty, Shirley MacLaine, the Arquette family and Bing Crosby).

Council thanked her for a great presentation and her efforts.

Old Business

A. Follow-Up Review of FY25 Proposed Budget – Mr. Wilson asked if Council had any questions.

Councilman Wood asked for clarification on the health insurance increase and whether the Town was competitive with other localities. Mr. Wilson advised that 8.7% was across the board noting it was an elective and he was unsure where the Town ranked with other localities. Mayor Cockrell clarified the breakdown estimate of the increase was 6% for the Town and 2% for the employees, noting single coverage was paid at 100% by the Town.

Councilman Wood questioned whether the budget included seed money for the Front Royal Economic Development Authority (FREDA). Mr. Wilson advised that it was \$50,000 added to the roughly \$80,000 already there totaling \$130,000.



Councilman Wood confirmed that there was not an additional Zoning Officer in the budget. Mr. Waltz advised that there were no additional full-time positions in the budget.

Councilman Wood questioned whether there was money for a Sidewalk Master Plan. Mr. Wilson advised there was not but there was Storm Water Mapping. Mr. Waltz explained that Storm Water Mapping comes out of the General Fund since it is rainwater and rainwater was not treated.

Councilman Ingram questioned how close Prospect Bridge renovations were. Mr. Wilson advised that if the Town received the revenue sharing there will be enough funds in the 2027-2028 budget. He confirmed that there were enough funds to begin the 8th Street Bridge renovation, unless the bids came in high noting it will go out to bid this summer or fall.

Councilman Wood questioned if there were funds for derelict structures. Mr. Wilson advised that there were funds for property maintenance but nothing outside the normal budgeted numbers.

Mr. Waltz advised that the items discussed during the retreat would be included in next year's budget or find funds mid-year.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned whether employees knew the value of their whole salary package. Mr. Waltz advised that staff was working on this initiative.

Mr. Wilson advised that the budget would come back to the Council on April 1st to ask for a recommendation on tax rates, ordinance for sewer increase and appropriation ordinance.

B. Solid Waste Private Property Collection – Mr. Wilson voiced concern over the current ordinance (Town Code Section 85-6) that deals with additional charge for entry onto private property noting that (20) of the (63) accounts were being collected due to medical concerns creating operational issues. Mr. Wilson advised that the next component was Main Street. He proposed scheduling the consultants with the stakeholders (businesses and residents) for a Town Hall Meeting and return to Council in a month or two with a recommendation and an ordinance amendment. Mr. Waltz confirmed that the Town Hall Meetings would be held in the Town Hall and will be recorded. He commended staff for their long hours on this issue. He noted that it was more than an operational issue, it was amending Town Code and making individuals reapply to reaffirm a necessity.

Council agreed to have staff begin conversations with consultants and stakeholders.

~~C. Alley Vacation on 7th Street Viewing Committee Report~~ REMOVED

CLOSED MEETING

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne 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 the Town Manager and Town Attorney and 2) pursuant to Section 2.23711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia, consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where



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.

such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body, more specifically, Town of Front Royal v. Front Royal Limited Partnership.

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

No – N/A

Absent – Councilwoman Morris

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Vice Mayor Sealock 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 Sealock, Ingram, Rappaport, DeDomenico-Payne, Wood

No – N/A

Absent – Councilwoman Morris

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Adjourned approximately 11:30pm

Approved by Town Council

Date: 3/25/24