



## Town Council Work Session Minutes of 3 /6 / 24 - Page | 1

*The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda.*

**Appoint Clerk-** Vice Mayor Sealock moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Council appoint Hillary Wilfong as Clerk pro tempore for tonight's meeting March 6, 2024.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Joseph E. Waltz  
Temporary Clerk Hillary Wilfong

Vote: Yes- Council members Sealock, Ingram, Morris, Rappaport, DeDomenico-Payne, Wood

No-N/A

Absent- N/A

Abstain N/A

ROLL CALL

ROLL CALL BY CLERK PRO TEMPORE

REVIEW OF FY24 TOWN COUNCIL RETREAT FOR JANUARY 29-30, 2024- Mayor Cockrell thanked all the Council members for attending the goal session retreat and attending tonight's meeting to review the goals as tonight Council will zero in and decided our priorities. Mr. Waltz distributed the vision and mission statement, the Council's goals, core values and tagline that was agreed upon at the meeting.

**Vision Statement-** Front Royal is a place citizens and business are proud to call home and where there is a strong sense of community and commitment to sustain the quality of life for future generations.

**Mission Statement-** It is the mission of the Town of Front Royal to provide its citizens, businesses, and visitors with quality public services in a fiscally prudent manner that sustains Front Royal's character, beauty, and small-town charm.

**Council's Goals-** Promote Community and Economic Well-Being- Capitalize on Front Royalls many assets, location, and heritage to enhance the community and economic well-being of its citizens and business alike.

Practice Good Governance- Perform functions effectively while being accountable to citizens of Front Royal.

Infrastructure- Within our fiscal capacity we will maintain and enhance our infrastructure.

**Core Values-** Accountable, Ethical, Respectful, Responsive, Transparent

**Tagline-** "Front Royal, where you can spend a lifetime."

Mr. Waltz advised that the Council's three goals are very broad, therefore for this meeting we will focus on specific goals. To help narrow down Council's goals, a survey was emailed to each Council member, and from those results Mr. Waltz was able to produce a goal sheet for each main goal, with primary action steps, which had the highest number from the survey, then secondary action steps, and lastly the remaining action steps, which were the goals that were not necessarily selected, but still valuable. Mayor Cockrell added that after we narrow down the goals and produce an annual report, it is her hopes to present this to the press and all citizens.



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GOAL DISCUSSION- PRACTICE GOOD GOVERNANCE- Mr. Waltz distributed the first goal sheet for Good Governance, Mr. Waltz reviewed the Primary Action Steps, which were in the top two of survey results.

- 1) Ensure the Town of Front Royal is accountable to the citizens and businesses they serve through the production and distribution of an annual report which details how taxes and fees paid by citizens and businesses were allocated and for what purpose during the fiscal year.

Mr. Waltz shared that after the retreat, implementation of the annual report immediately began, which is almost complete, Mr. Waltz hopes to share with Council by next week. Mayor Cockrell shared her enthusiasm for the annual report and believes it will be well received.

- 2.) Develop and administer a Front Royal community satisfaction survey that will permit the town citizens to assess and grade the services and programs they receive from the town on an annual basis.

Mayor Cockrell believes that this is a great idea, and we could receive a lot of valuable information, however, the challenge will be participation from citizens and distribution of the survey.

Mr. Waltz asked how the survey would be drafted, whether by staff or by a third party. Councilwoman Morris expressed her concerns about receiving survey results from our citizens, from previous Town surveys done by a third party, when they checked the location of the participants of the survey, a large number were not even local. Councilman Ingram asked what the criteria of the survey would be and unsure if a survey before the annual report and Council's goals were implemented if the survey would offer much value, however if we pushed it out a year, we could have different results. Councilman Rapport advised if we used statistical control measures it would help control the outliers of the negative comments. Councilwoman Morris also agreed with Councilman Ingram about having a brief, non-invasive survey, like Survey Monkey, with an easier template. Mr. Waltz advised that would have to explore options, that staff would not be able to handle this with the analytical piece along with ensuring that local citizens are the ones completing the survey. Mr. Waltz requested 90 days to investigate the avenue to facilitate the survey and financial aspects, however it would likely not be completed within six months. Mayor Cockrell suggested that we ask Town Staff what questions they think would be beneficial, or what information would they like to obtain from the citizens.

Mr. Waltz reviewed the secondary action steps; Mayor Cockrell advised that the adopted mission statement, vision statement, core values and town goals be on the website by the end of this month. Vice Mayor Sealock acknowledged that the Town is working on our service departments being self-supporting. Councilwoman Morris advised that they are not yet self-supporting, however we have a cost-of-service study completed for solid waste and will be presented at the next Town Council Meeting. Mr. Waltz advised that it is key to do cost of service studies every few years to enable the Town to become self-supporting. Mayor Cockrell discussed having an open house and having citizens an opportunity to interact with town staff regarding services that they receive and how we can enhance and improve our delivery process, which seems like the survey would also cover some of that, however an open house is a great. Mayor Cockrell also noted that having a citizen's academy would be a great way to interact with citizens, however, worries that it could be a burden for Town Staff. Mr. Waltz shared that he would be excited for a citizen's academy, and visioned it has citizens meeting once a month for six months and engaging with a different department each month. Councilwoman Morris agreed that she would be interested in a citizen's academy, because it shows other aspects of government work that citizens may be unaware of. Mr. Waltz advised if this is Council's pleasure, he can work on this for the September 2024.

Mr. Waltz reiterated the goals from good governance.

- 1) Ensure the Town of Front Royal is accountable to the citizens and businesses they serve through the production and distribution of an annual report which details how taxes and fees paid by citizens and businesses were allocated and for what purpose during the fiscal year. This should be completed by the end of the month.
- 2) Develop and administer a Front Royal community satisfaction survey that will permit the town citizens to assess and grade the services and programs they receive from the town on an annual basis. Mr. Waltz will follow up with 90 days.



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3) Promote a positive and interactive relationship with town citizens and stakeholders by sponsoring educational initiatives such as a citizen's police academy, a citizens local government academy and a citizen's transportation and public utilities academy. Mr. Waltz will follow up in 90 days.

Mr. Waltz also shared that he would follow up with an open house for the Town and Town Council, he will investigate the best time, day, and a venue.

Mayor Cockrell discussed that the other goals are already in progress, and we can provide additional goal updates at Council meetings.

Councilwoman Morris discussed adding a Council Corner to the newsletter, to share news with town citizens and to seek feedback from the town citizens, Mr. Waltz agreed, that shouldn't be an issue, the next newsletter will be published in April.

GOAL DISCUSSION SUSTAIN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE- Mr. Waltz distributed the next goal sheet Sustain Our Infrastructure, Mr. Waltz reviewed the Primary Action Steps, which were in the top three of survey results.

1.) Conclude the Leach Run conveyance.

Mr. Waltz advised that this was on everyone's survey and agreed it needs to be completed.

Councilwoman Morris shared at the joint Town and Council meeting that progress could be made on this goal. She also shared that she thinks that meeting will outline the needs for infrastructure from the zoning ordinances.

2.) Prioritize the enhancements that need to be made to the town's water system, sewer system, electric system and solid waste service and identify how the enhancements will be financed.

Councilwoman Morris shared that this also encompasses some of the remaining action steps and would like this to be included in this goal. Complete the redundant water line project and make clear well 1 and 2 repairs. Then we would need to develop a plan for these to be completed.

Mr. Waltz also shared that inflow and infiltration should also be included in this goal, as the Town is working on this action as well.

3.) Secure McKay Spring as the town's second water source

Mr. Waltz shared that he recently had meetings with all staff departments and received thoughts on a potential water source. Mayor Cockrell suggested that we update the goal to state that we will explore or identify secondary water sources.

Mayor Cockrell read that enhance walkability in town by building more sidewalks, and to turn that into an actual measure goal, we would need to start with a sidewalk master plan, allowing us to see where all current sidewalks are and where they need to be extended. Mayor Cockrell advised that a measurable goal would be to "develop a master sidewalk plan" Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne suggested that we could include the progress we made in our annual plan next year.

Mayor Cockrell suggested that for the first work session of the month we revisit the list and make it a regular agenda item.

GOAL DISCUSSION- PROMOTE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC WELL BEING Mr. Waltz distributed the next goal sheet Promote Community and Economic Well-Being, Mr. Waltz reviewed the Primary Action Steps, which were in the top three of survey results.

1.) Enhance the appearance of property and the improvements on property by proactively enforcing the town's property maintenance code.

Mayor Cockrell suggested that this is a great goal, and should stay a priority, however we are doing this, and yes we are proactively enforcing the town properties maintenance code.

2.) We need to determine the number and location of blighted properties (inclusive of structures and buildings) in Front Royal, and we need to design and implement a mitigation strategy that will address the issue.

Mr. Waltz already feels like we are moving forward on this thanks to Town Staff. Councilwoman Morris shared that after the meeting Monday night, it was stated by legal council that we cannot go after those buildings, we do not have the



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authority, if it is not a health and safety issue, we cannot do anything about them. Mayor Cockrell stated that our goals need to be something that we can achieve.

Mayor Cockrell and Mr. Waltz agreed that goal number two will need to be crafted as a measurable goal and rewritten.

- 3.) We need to develop a strategy that will address the need for affordable housing in Front Royal.  
Mr. Waltz shared that he believes that this is critical, however unsure what the solution is.  
Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne suggested we need to determine our direction, whether this more suited for FREDA. Councilwoman Morris believes that non-governing agencies are working on this as well. The Council agreed to support this goal; however, it is out of their scope.

The council discussed beautifying the town's primary entrance corridors, and leaving one of the goals, along with finding a strategy to improve the appearance of Front Royals' major travel corridors. Mr. Waltz discussed our wayfinding signs and how they need to be updated.

Councilwoman Morris suggested that the Council should provide FREDA with a revenue stream so it can function on behalf of the town. Mr. Waltz shared that he feels that FREDA is up and running but needs revenue to take off.

Council discussed concluding the Afton Inn project, which all agreed they want it to complete however, Council has no authority to make someone complete their project on private property. The Council noted that we are already promoting Front Royal as a tourist destination and are working with the planning commission along with the Town's Planning and Zoning staff, thus developing a strategy and timetable for revising and updating the Front Royal's zoning and subdivision ordinances.

The Council decided to provide FREDA with a revenue stream so it can function on behalf of the town, as a primary goal.

Mayor Cockrell addressed the Council, and asked what the next steps are, Mr. Waltz suggested that we can unveil this at the next meeting on March 25th if that is Council's pleasure and draft a press release to distribute to the citizens.

The summary of the goals are as follows;

### PRACTICE GOOD GOVERNANCE

- 1) Ensure the Town of Front Royal is accountable to the citizens and businesses they serve through the production and distribution of an annual report which details how taxes and fees paid by citizens and businesses were allocated and for what purpose during the fiscal year.
- 2.) Develop and administer a Front Royal community satisfaction survey that will permit the town citizens to assess and grade the services and programs they receive from the town on an annual basis.
- 3) Promote a positive and interactive relationship with town citizens and stakeholders by sponsoring educational initiatives such as a citizen's police academy, a citizens local government academy and a citizen's transportation and public utilities academy

### SUSTAIN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1.) Conclude the Leach Run conveyance.
- 2.) Prioritize the enhancements that need to be made to the town's water system, sewer system, electric system and solid waste service and identify how the enhancements will be financed.
  - Make clear well 1 and 2 repairs.
  - Complete the redundant water line project.
- 3.) Identify a second water source for the town.

### PROMOTE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC WELL BEING

- 1.) Enhance the appearance of property and the improvements on property by proactively enforcing the town's property maintenance code.



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- 2.) Work closely with planning and zoning on blighted properties and implement a mitigation strategy that will address the issue.
- 3.) Provide FREDA with a revenue stream so it can function on behalf of the Town.

Mayor Cockrell adjourned the special meeting at 7:57pm

Approved by Town Council  
3/25/24