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
Vice Mayor Amber F. Veitenthal
Councilwoman Melissa DeDomenico-Payne
Councilman Joshua L. Ingram
Councilman H. Bruce Rappaport
Councilman R. Wayne Sealock
Councilman Glenn E. Wood

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

Presentation by VDOT: Analysis of Royal Ln and John Marshall Hwy Requested for Continued Discussion of a Request for a Special Use Permit for Multi-Family Apartments and an Office Building off Royal Lane from Pennoni Associates

Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke recapped the Special Use Permit (SUP) application noting that the area was zoned commercial however multi-family apartments were allowed. She explained the reference to an "old Remount Road" noting it was not an actual road but more like a trail and would be expensive to bring up to state standards. She advised that the Comprehensive Plan called for an extension road off Remount Road that would intersect Royal Lane. Ms. Kopishke advised that a traffic analysis was not required for this project and the one that the applicant presented was ten years old. Per VDOT the current annual average daily traffic was listed at 14,000 and the annual average weekday traffic at 16,000. She stated that the (36) proposed apartments were not going to generate anywhere near the amount of traffic a by right commercial use would. She gave data furnished by VDOT that was furnished to them by the Front Royal Police Department, on car accidents happening at John Marshall and Royal Lane noting that the project was not going to trigger any major traffic requirements. She stressed that Council was to determine whether the SUP was appropriate at this site reiterating that it was a by-right commercial property that could generate more traffic than the apartments if it were a highly successful business.

VDOT representative Joe Johnson was asked to explain the three options for the intersection at John Marshall Highway and Royal Lane that would be an expense to the Town not the applicant: 1) Signage & Painting Improvements which was the cheapest option at a cost of 34,852.00; 2) Continuous Green T at a cost of $228,688.00; and 3) Traffic Signal at a cost between $300,000 - $800,000. Discussion ensued about the pros and cons of each option. Mr. Johnson stated that the options would improve safety by reducing the number of conflict points but cautioned that they would not reduce backup issues on John Marshall Highway. Council voiced concern that the Town was thinking about making improvements to a road that needed improvement but there were several roads throughout Town that needed improvement and as development continued John Marshall Highway was going to get busier.

Council mentioned that a Transportation Study was needed. Interim Town Manager BJ Wilson advised that there was money in the budget for a study and staff was working on a Request for Proposals (RFP). It was agreed that signage clarity before approaching the intersection was needed. Councilman Wood suggested painting dedicated right and left lanes on Royal Lane and see what the impact would be since several parking spots would be removed to accommodate the lanes. Council voiced concern about maybe the apartments becoming condos for sale versus renting. Ms. Kopishke explained that there was nothing in the Town Code that separated condos from apartments, explaining that they were both multi-family use and single-family use was not allowed in C-1 District. Town Attorney George Sonnet advised that this was not a land use issue. Council agreed to move to a public hearing on April 28th and the dedicated lane and removal of parking spaces on Royal Lane would be reviewed administratively as it was a Town Manager decision.

Virtual Presentation by Stantec Consulting for a Cost-of-Service Study for Water and Sewer – Mr. Wilson advised that the Town's standard practice was to have a full Cost-of-Service Study performed every 3 – 5 years to ensure the Town was able to properly cover expenditures as well as meet debt service obligation requirements for outstanding bonds. He continued that the Town had Stantec Consulting perform a study in 2019 and again in 2021. He turned the virtual presentation over to David Hyder, Senior Principal of Stantec and Kevan Cook, Manager. They went over their background and what the Town had contacted them to perform including 1)complete revenue sufficiency analysis to determine water and sewer rate increases today and in the future; 2) evaluate current water and sewer system development charges and recommend changes for inside and outside the town limits; 3) identify the allocated cost differentials between inside and outside town services to determine appropriate surcharges and 4) evaluate current septage haul fees and recommend changes. They continued by reviewing State Revolving Funds (SRF) funding of 1) Clearwell 1 & 2 repairs; 2) 4-H pump station and Jamestown pump station upgrades in FY2026; and 3) intake upgrade in FY2031. Mr. Wilson confirmed that the funding was included in the 2026 budget to borrow money for two of the projects and more information on the intake upgrades would come back for reevaluation.

Stantec continued with what a typical residential customer monthly bill impact would be for a ¾" meter with 5,500 gallons used and showed a survey of how Front Royal compared with other localities. Stantec continued with an explanation of why an increase in the Septic Tank Waste Fee of 17% recommending the Town update the fee to reflect the cost of current treatment. They suggested updating annually in accordance with the sewer rate plan since it had not kept pace with increases to sewer treatment costs. Regarding the system development charges, they noted "growth should pay for growth" and recommended that the charges reflect the cost of the system infrastructure in current dollars advising of the increases with a schedule showing a comparison with other localities and Front Royal was at the lower end. They explained that the Town was on target with the inside and outside town cost differential and no change was recommended. Stantec's final recommendations were: 1)Rate Increases – Water: 3.0% annually from FY2026 – FY 2030, 4% annually from FY2031 – FY2035 and Sewer: 2.25% annually; 2) Septic Tank Waste Fees – increase fee from $50.00 to $58.55 per KGAL in FY2026 and continue to increase fee annually with the sewer rates; 3) System Development Charge – water from $2,663 to $4,466, sewer from $7,330 to $7,386 and 4) Inside Town and Outside Town Cost Differential – no change to existing surcharges required.

Council confirmed that the average bill increase would be $2.27 or 2.5%. Mr. Wilson advised that staff would come back to Council with proposed ordinance amendments for the rates along with the appropriation ordinance. He suggested placing the increase of the Septic Tank Waste Fee on the April Liaison Committee Meeting for awareness. After a brief discussion it was suggested that the Septic Tank Waste Fee Ordinance Amendment be effective upon approval not July 1st.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Bid for Waterline Upgrades on N. Royal Avenue, W 12th Street, and Cherry Street – Purchasing Manager Michelle Campbell briefed Council on the bidding process and reached out to confirm price since it was much lower than the others and staff received five good references. Council agreed to place on the Consent Agenda for March 24th.

B. Transfer of Retired Bucket Truck to Warren County Public Schools – Mayor Cockrell gave the background on the Town's retired 1989 bucket truck and the specific need the Warren County Public School had with changing light bulbs in parking lots and athletic fields that if they had their own truck there would be no need to rent equipment each time it was needed. She commented that it was a "win-win" for the community since the Town and County resident were all taxpayers of the schools. Council agreed to add it under Business Items on the March 24th agenda.

C. First Amendment to Pole Attachment Agreement to Extend for a Period of Fifteen (15) Years a Mutual Agreement for the Attachment of Facilities to Town and to Brightspeed Owned Utility Poles – Mr. Sonnett explained that the Town had several pole attachment agreements with several franchisees and while others were renewed administratively this one was twenty years old and Brightspeed uses the Town's poles but the Town also uses their poles necessitating a new agreement. Council agreed to add to the Consent Agenda on March 24th.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Lease Agreement for the Lease of Town-Owned Property Located in the Peyton Street Parking Area – Mr. Sonnett briefly went over the highlights of the agreement for On Cue Sports and Billiards LLC and Front Royal Brewing Co, LLC (On Cue Sports Bar and Grill and Vibrissa Beer respectively) to lease a parcel of land in the Peyton Street Parking Lot for the placement of private solid waste containers and related facilities. He advised that the current enclosure had damage, and the lessees have asked the Town to repair it. Council agreed to the repairs before the lease went into effect. Staff confirmed that the existing dumpster would be used elsewhere as there were dumpsters in need of replacement. Mr. Wilson advised that the lessee will be painting the enclosure and placing a sign as well. There was discussion about maintenance and whether repairs, after the lease was signed, would be completed in a timely manner. Council agreed to a five-year lease with Council approval upon renewal. Mr. Sonnet advised he would revise the lease to state that language. Council agreed to a public hearing on the lease for April 28th.

CLOSED MEETING

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Wood 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 Position 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, the insolvency and disposition of assets of the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Front Royal and the County of Warren, Virginia.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne
No – N/A
Absent – N/A   Abstain – N/A   ROLL CALL

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Councilman Wood 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 Wood, Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne
No – N/A
Absent – N/A   Abstain – N/A   ROLL CALL

Adjourned approximately 10:41 pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 3/24/25