



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

Automated Speed Camera Update – Chief Brian Whited reviewed the *Automated Photo-Speed Enforcement Program Citation Report* that included citations processed, exceptions, spoiled, administratively voided, valid citations and paid citations from May 2024 to February 2025, noting that exceptions could include emergencies and school schedule changes for early/late dismissals. He explained that payments could be delayed, placed on a payment plan or appealed therefore not showing up in the numbers. Chief Whited reviewed the four school zones (A.S. Rhodes Elementary, Ressie Jeffries Elementary, Skyline Middle and Warren County Middle) and the five phases of the program (*Pre-implementation Speed Study*, public information/education, warning, enforcement, and *Post Enforcement Speed Study*). He concluded that there had been no discussion regarding additional cameras.

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Proposed Budget Presentation & Calendar Year 2025 Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Rates Discussion – Interim Town Manager/Finance Director BJ Wilson reviewed the proposed budget highlighting various areas including **FY26 Revenue Forecasting** noting the continuance of uncertainty in forecasting; **FY 25-26 Snap Shot of Funds** with an overall increase of 10%; **Special Fund Decrease/General Fund Increase** explaining the repayment of the Economic Access Grant of \$650,000 from VDOT for West Main Connector and the addition of \$216,665 being applied to the General Fund for FY26; **Real Estate Tax Rate per \$100 Assessed Value** showed the difference between 2024 and 2025 real estate land and improvement values noting that property reassessment figures increased approximately 48.3% therefore the equalization of the 2025 Calendar Year Real Estate Tax Rate would be \$0.067per \$100; **Real Estate Tax Comparison Chart** showed that a 1% increase (\$0.068) kept the rate equalized and was allowed before specialized advertising for equalization was required; **Personal Property Rate per \$100 of Value** was decreased approximately 9% but keeping the same rate of \$0.64 was recommended since there was a spike in revenue during the pandemic; **General Fund Revenue Highlights** noting that transient occupancy tax/intermediary had decreased confirming that short term rentals were a separate line item; **Enterprise Fund Sales of Service** noted a decrease in sewer partly due to the increase of users participation in the *Summer Sewer Program* and industrial users finding more effective ways to save on sewer usage such as recycling water. He advised that **Solid Waste Sales** would be determined after Warren County determined an increase in tipping fees. He advised that *Dominion Power's Water Agreement* would end December 2025 ending the payment of in-town water rates and beginning of out-of-town water rates; **Revenue Impacts for Enterprise Funds** projected an increase of 17.7% in electric purchase power noting that a presentation by AMP was scheduled for the April 14th work session; **Water/Sewer Recommended Rate Increases** would be effective July 1, 2025 (water 3%, sewer 2.25%) showing a typical residential customer monthly bill impact from FY2025 – FY2030; **Solid Waste Rates** showed no increase contingent upon tipping fees determination by Warren County; **Snapshot of Total \$56.7 Million Budget** focused on proposed full-time positions: (Additional Police Dispatcher, Planner Position, Community Engagement Coordinator, Deputy Director of Public Works and Water/Sewer Utility Line Technician). There was discussion on the various positions with Council



suggesting adding a Civil Engineer position and whether staff could “weigh in” on the positions asking if implementation could be delayed. Mr. Wilson advised that he would discuss with staff and return to Council at the next work session; **Employee Expense Highlights** focused on the 2.7% COLA, 3% Average Merit Increase, and 6.5% health insurance increase. Council voiced concern about the increase in health insurance; **General Fund Highlights** included various items, specifically a consultant for the firing range and GIS Services. It was explained that options were being explored for both; **General Fund Highlights/ACES Projects** noted large tree removals and replacements around the gazebo area due to disease for \$25,000; **General Fund Capital/Debt Expenditures** gave an overview of various debt services, bonds and leases. Council questioned grants for the police body worn cameras. It was noted that staff applied and received two that the department uses for backup; **Street Fund Highlights** added a new department (Traffic Signalization) which has no additional employees and was created for better expense tracking; **Highway Maintenance Highlights** showed various projects with years of funding for each, noting that the track loader was used across several departments. It was stated that the paving plan was performed in conjunction with waterline upgrades. Mr. Wilson explained the process of removing and replacing vehicles and equipment; **Electric Expenditure Highlights** showed various items including 1) the increase in purchase power at 17.6%, 2) setting aside money for a bucket truck, 3) Happy Creek Substation Transformer and 4) the creation of a new line item (Vegetation Management-Tree Trimming) for better expense tracking; **Water Expenditure Highlights** showed various projects. Council questioned the secondary water source and the expenses associated with it. Mr. Wilson advised that he would be bringing that before Council in May with money coming from the current budget; **Sewer Expenditure Highlights** showed various projects noting the I & I Abatement Consent Order ending soon; **Water/Sewer Debt Service** showed various dates ending the debt service; **New Water/Sewer Debt Service** included various debt service specifically the Riverton Pump Station and Centrifuge. Mr. Wilson noted that a Task Order was coming before them at the next work session for the 4-H and Jamestown Water Pump Stations; **Solid Waste Highlights** included various items, specifically the brush grinding services with the goal of selling the Town's tub grinder. After much discussion on the tax rate, staff was directed to advertise the real estate rate at \$0.068 per \$100 and the personal property at \$0.64, reiterating that \$0.068 was still considered equalization.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Special Use Permit Submitted by Heritage Hall XIII, LLC for Expansion of (20) Beds and Associated Facilities Located at 400 W. Strasburg Road – Deputy Zoning Administrator/Town Planner I John Ware advised that Council approved a nursing home in September 1985 and a zoning permit in 1986 but did not approve a Special Use Permit (SUP) which was need because it was nonconforming that required it. The Planning Commission recently recommended approval of the SUP. There was much discussion on whether Council was approving the expansion or the nonconformance. Mr. Ware clarified that Council was not approving the expansion, explaining that upon approval of the SUP the applicant would have to apply for the expansion. Town Attorney George Sonnett explained that expanding the current use makes the entire use conforming in one step. Council agreed to move to a public hearing on April 28th.

B. Request for a Special Exception Submitted by Rappahannock HC LLC t Reduce the Required Minimum Street Pavement Width from Thirty-Six Feet (36') to Twenty-Nine (29') at 1321 Happy Creek Road – Mr. Ware explained that Town Code required 36-foot-wide streets and VDOT required residential subdivisions up to 2,000 vehicles 29-foot-wide streets with parking on both sides. He explained that the applicant was requesting 29 feet with parking on one side noting the right-of-way would not change. Council voiced concern over whether a fire truck would have difficulty. It was confirmed that while it met code the Fire Marshall would review the site plan and make a final determination. Council questioned how the parking would be enforced if there was “no parking” on one side. Councilman Ingram suggested amending the Town Code to accommodate requests such as these especially since the Town Code did not include updated VDOT standards. Council agreed to move to a public hearing on April 28th.



C. Proposed Improvements at Royal Land/John Marshall Highway in Exchange for Not Extending Pavement – Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke stated that this was additional information for the public hearing on April 28th. She showed suggestions by the developer to potentially improve the intersection at Royal Lane and John Marshall Highway in exchange for not extending pavement at the other end of the development. She advised that the developer would bond intersection improvements at \$34,852. There was discussion about striping Royal Lane with two dedicated lanes (left and right) to improve traffic flow. Mr. Wilson advised that staff had been working on the signs and restriping to improve the situation now on Royal Lane. There was concern that the proposed improvements by the developer may improve flow on John Marshall Highway but not on Royal Lane.

Liaison Committee Meeting Items for April 17th

A. Joint Towing Board Request – Mayor Cockrell explained this request was discussed at the October 2024 Liaison meeting and voiced concern over the request for five towing companies as a cap.

B. Septic Haul Rate – Mr. Wilson advised that he would be in attendance.

C. MOU with Warren County Regarding Building Code Enforcement Discussion – Ms. Kopishke and Mr. Ware advised that they had discovered that states codes mentioned in the MOU no longer existed. They explained the need for two separate MOUS's (maintenance and erosion/sediment). They were asked to attend the meeting.

D. Criser Road Boundary Line Adjustment Discussion – Mr. Sonnett advised that a survey was completed last year, and it confirmed that the Town's rights-of-way were not within their boundaries thus prompting the request for a boundary line adjustment. He explained that it would require a mutual resolution and public hearings held by both localities.

E. MOU With Warren County Regarding Avtex Property Discussion – Mr. Sonnett advised that in 1999 three parties (Town, County, EDA) entered into an MOU with paragraphs 3 and 4 calling for the deeding of certain parcels. He continued that there should be an effort to reconcile the Concept Plan attached to MOU.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal suggested asking the County if a consultant for the Law Enforcement Gun Range had been hired.

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, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body, more specifically, 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, stormwater issue on W. Commonwealth Drive; and, 3) 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 including the Avtex Property 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



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.

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal 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 11:15pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 4/28/25