



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: Town Manager Joseph W. Petty
Town Attorney George M. Sonnett, Jr.
Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley
Various members of the staff and public

ACTION ITEM – Adoption of Annual Appropriation Ordinance (Budget) for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council approve and adopt the Annual Appropriation Ordinance (Budget) for Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 as presented.

Councilman Wood explained that the Town's tax rate was set in March based on projected tax revenue the Town would receive from the County; however, the numbers from the County changed in May creating a \$400,000.00 shortage in revenue to support the Town's budget. He complimented Director of Finance BJ Wilson on creating a balanced budget with what he had. Mr. Wood voiced concern that the tax rates were set without all the information, therefore, he did not support the budget because it was less than what citizens expected, particularly having to take from reserve funds to cover the shortfall which could have been used for other things. Mayor Cockrell advised that this concern was being forwarded to the Liaison Committee Meeting Agenda in July. She expressed hope that the County could give an explanation and ensure that nothing like this happened again moving forward.

Councilman Rappaport stated that by not raising taxes the Town could not be made better. He mentioned the loss of Avtex and how revenue needed to come from businesses not just the backs of the taxpayers.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal recognized the concerns of Councilmembers Wood and Rappaport but opined that once taxes were raised, they would never be decreased because things become complacent and reliant on the revenue. She suggested continuing to support the Front Royal Economic Development Authority (FREDA) by using land for purposes of creating income for the Town and lobbying congressman as to what they were doing about economic development in Front Royal and Warren County. She stated that people could not pay more taxes.

While Councilman Ingram agreed with Vice Mayor Veitenthal he expressed disappointment that the County gave the wrong numbers to the Town, and how the property reassessment hearings were handled. There was some discussion on how reassessments performed every other year were adding to the problem. It was agreed to add the concern of the projected tax revenue to the next Liaison Committee Meeting.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Veitenthal, Sealock, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – Councilman Wood and Rappaport

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL ON ADOPTION OF THE APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE

NEW BUSINESS

Electric Cost of Service Analysis, Rate Study & 5-Year Cash Requirements Projection – Purchasing Manager Michelle Campbell explained the procurement and evaluation process with staff recommending RGrid Power PLLC of Wake Forest, NC for the award of the contract. Council confirmed that the committee was internal, this process was done



every five years and funds would come out of the enterprise funds. Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne questioned whether there was any financial advantage by choosing a vendor in Virginia. Staff explained that the RFP was sent to thirteen companies with only two responses. It was noted that the Town was very unique in owning its own Electric Department. Mr. Wilson advised that once the study was complete, the Town's competitive rates ranking would be confirmed. Council agreed to place it on the June 23rd Consent Agenda.

An Ordinance Amending/Re-Ordaining a Franchise Granted to Brightspeed of Virginia LLC – Town Attorney George Sonnett explained that part one was the pole attachment agreement and what was before them tonight was part two, the 15-year extension of local telephone exchange and telecommunications franchise agreement. He reviewed several changes in the agreement including the 15-year extension, 3% franchise fee, hold harmless provision and the addition of bonding provisions. He noted that it was currently in Brightspeed's counsel's hands for review and once he received a response, he would circulate it to Council. Council agreed to advertise for a public hearing on June 23rd.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Town of Front Royal Farm Property – Town Manager Joe Petty reviewed the four options: Option 1 – County Resident Yard Waste Fee; Option 2 – Reduction in Tipping Fees; Option 3 – Accept no County Deliveries; and Option 4 – No Change. He stated that all the options were discussed with the departments of Finance and Public Works. There was much discussion about selecting Option 2; however, they directed Mr. Petty to approach the County first to determine if they would agree to Option 2 and come back to Council for further discussion.

Request for Reimbursement of SUP Application Fee from Divinum Auxilium Academy – Mr. Petty advised that he met with Mr. Sonnett with reference to the state code that was mentioned to Council last week and recommended that the waiver/reimbursement was prohibited per state law. Mr. Petty read the church's Articles of Corporation and specifically noted that they stated, "catholic education to children". Vice Mayor Veitenthal questioned whether Council could use the 25% reduction for nonprofits pursuant to the ordinance passed May 27th. Mr. Sonnett advised that he had not considered whether the discount could be proposed but advised that the discount would be applied on a case-by-case basis. He noted that Habitat for Humanity and Salvation Army were enumerated in the state statute as being non-denominations reiterating that state legislature sets the rules. Councilman Rappaport opined that they were a nonprofit giving a background of statistics. After a consensus it was determined that Council would not give the waiver/reimbursement.

2025-2028 Strategic Plan – Goals Action Items Review – Mayor Cockrell explained that tonight was to update the dates and deadlines mentioned in the current document. Council and staff updated the items, and it was determined that a new updated list would be distributed to Council once it was ready.

Adjourned approximately 8:15pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 6/23/25