



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

ABSENT: 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

Presentation from CHA On Flow Metering – Stevie Steele from CHA gave a presentation “I & I Abatement/Consent Order Management Update”. He showed a diagram of a home that showed inflow and infiltration sources underground. He reviewed the definitions and acronyms commonly used for Council to get a better understanding of the system. Mr. Steele gave a brief I & I History from 2009 to the present that included colored mapping of various projects and explained the drainage basins. The list of activities with costs from 2009 – 2020 showed there was work being done every year in the Town. It was noted that the work was performed by Town staff and a cost based upon staff and equipment use had not been calculated. Mr. Steele continued the I & I Project History from 2020 to present, showing the more recent projects and touched on projects planned for 2026. Mr. Steele gave an overview of the I & I Impact to the Town’s Wastewater Treatment Plant showing graphs for groundwater and stormwater noting that he used this data for flow metering throughout the Town. He continued explaining the 95% rule and the VPDES Permit. He continued with the I & I Impact at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in 2024 and while improvements have been made to the system the Town needed to continue moving forward. Mr. Steele then explained the EQ Basin/Lagoon specifically noting that DEQ’s Plan of Action required continued work to reduce I & I in the collection system. He concluded with the next step for reduction which involved monitoring the system every spring, noting that the flow monitoring selected the Happy Creek 100-year flood plain manholes to be inspected for defects which will involve smoke testing within this area and use of CCTV data collection and develop CIP project for implementation.

There was brief discussion on how roof gutters and sump pumps were creating issues. Mr. Steele explained the relining of pipes and drainage basins and the importance of flow metering since it helped him produce his capacity report. There was a brief discussion on slip lining and bursting . Council voiced concern about how to advise the public properly when the smoke testing was in their neighborhood. They felt like communication should be more than emails and texts. Mr. Steele suggested placing door hangers in the area where the smoke testing would occur advising that the testing could occur between now and July.

ACTION ITEMS

Repayment of Economic Development Access Grant

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council approve repayment to the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Transportation for the Economic Access Grant in the amount of \$106,558.26.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal stated that those parts of the current Town Council were not part of this situation that occurred with the former EDA nor was the Town Staff at fault and expressed hope the community could move



forward from this. Mayor Cockrell concurred and further stated that no one on the current Warren County EDA was a part of the situation either

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

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Wood

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Resolution for the 2026 Schedule of Regular Meetings of Town Council

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Sealock that Council approve a Resolution for the 2026 Schedule of Regular Meetings of Town Council as presented.

Town Attorney Sonnett explained that even though it was stated in Town Code state law says it is to affirmatively be done every year.

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

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Wood

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

NEW BUSINESS

Town of Front Royal Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Operations Policy – Risk and Safety Coordinator Jose Riveria presented the sUAS (Small Unmanned Aircraft System) Policy for the Town of Front Royal. He explained that the policy establishes a formal framework for the management, deployment and oversight of Town-owned unmanned aircraft. Creating a centralized Town-wide sUAS Program administered by the Risk Management Department and governs both law enforcement and municipal use in compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws. Mr. Riveria began with acknowledging the various localities and agencies throughout Virginia that have already deployed their policies and assisted him with writing the Town's Policy. He clarified that a sUAS was a drone noting that a drone was just a component. He advised that the policy was designed to set clear objectives, clear authority and clear accountability. It is not; however, designed to dismiss public concerns or displace employees – no one's job is "going away". He gave examples as to why the Town should adopt an sUAS program specifically advising of calls received from law enforcement where a sUAS request was asked for. He gave various examples of other areas the sUAS could be used for such as flood damage, electric line damage, capturing pictures/videos of special events such as parades and GIS mapping capability. Mr. Riveria listed how the program operated (Federal Aviation Administration; Federal/State/Local Laws and Town of Front Royal sUAS Policy). He specifically stated that nothing was going in the air if the rules were not clear. He then went over how the sUAS program operated with eight (8) approved mission types (search/rescue; tactical/scene support; flood/storm response; utility infrastructure inspection; power line assessment; outage/obstruction sweep; development/mapping operations and tourism/special events), noting that every deployment would fall under one of the 8 mission types. Mr. Riveria continued with the operation showing the centralized sUAS administrator and program structure specifically noting that the Chief of Police would handle the police side. He continued with how to stay in compliance with federal, state and Town laws highlighting Section 19.2-60.1 (B) of the Code of Virginia. He also noted 10 emergency exemptions listed in the state code. At this time Mr. Riveria explained the S.O.A.R. (sUAS Operational Awareness & Review) initiative noting this was the Town's commitment to transparency. He concluded with "where do we go from here" explaining the six (6) different phases until being fully operational.



Council questioned the timeline for being fully operational. Mr. Riveria advised it could be several months noting that the pilot could be qualified by the end of February and approximately three to four months to get the equipment confirming the Town did not have equipment. He broke down the costs associated with the program and estimated approximately \$9,000 per aircraft that included the training of the pilot. He advised that he was looking into refurbished aircraft from those entities that were purchasing new ones. It was suggested to take advantage of the community college for classes as it could be cheaper. Council voiced concern on the liability of localities assisting each other with drone usage. Chief Whited advised of the MOU (Memorandum of Agreement) between the localities throughout the area and who were more than willing to assist. Mr. Riveria advised that VRSA would cover the use of the drones similar to how vehicles are covered. Mr. Sonnett advised that the MOU should address insurance issues. It was confirmed that only the policy would go to the agenda for approval. It was confirmed that each drone has its own markings. Council agreed to add to the consent agenda for the 26th.

Rights of Requesters and Responsibilities of Town of Front Royal FOIA Policy Revisions – Clerk of Council gave a brief overview of the revisions. Council agreed to place on consent agenda for the 26th.

Request to Reinstate Two Readings for Public Hearings – Mayor Cockrell gave a history of why this item was on the agenda and how it changed from two readings to one reading in 2021. Vice Mayor Veitenthal voiced concern that Council basically had to render action on something that may have just been heard for the first time at a public hearing calling it a disservice to the community. Council discussed various scenarios regarding the pros and cons of having two readings. It was also noted that there were times when speakers would hand information to the clerk at the public hearing and council would not receive those until after the public hearing reiterating that there was no time to digest what was written. Mr. Sonnet gave several options for Council other than acting at the public hearing. Mr. Sonnet suggested land issues could be two readings and the other one reading. Mayor Cockrell asked that this item be brought back to the work session on February 2nd for more discussion.

Ordinance Amendments to Chapter 72 Special Events Held on Town Streets and Public Property – Town Manager Joe Petty advised that the current policy was adopted in 2021 and stated that there had been a lot of events since then. He explained that he had taken the policy and “morphed” it into a Town Code Section with revisions. He hoped to present Council with a draft tonight, hear feedback and bring back to the February 2nd work session for further discussion. He advised that he had shared it with the Chamber of Commerce Board to get their feedback. He reviewed the highlights to include a committee, extended applications schedule, public safety plan, fee schedule, reoccurring events, neighborhood block parties, event notification requirements and after-action reporting to name a few. He noted that large events may have a larger impact on the community therefore police officers have double duty using October's tourist season as an example. He hoped to achieve accountability on the event organizers and focus on events throughout the Town not just downtown. A sliding scale for fees was mentioned and taken under advisement. Discussion ensued about perimeters when closing Main Street and the John Marlow Plaza for first time events versus long-time-standing events. Council suggested sending the policy to those event organizers that have had long-standing events so that they are made aware of what is coming and be able to voice their concerns. It was noted that Main Street had changed a lot since 2021 with a lot of diverse businesses and closing Main Street could affect those businesses. Mr. Petty mentioned that he has been holding event organizers true to the 30-day limit to ensure safety of the events and enough time to plan and prepare. Everyone agreed that notification was the key. Council questioned who the committee would be comprised of. Mr. Petty advised it would be the Town Manager, Public Works representative, Police Department representative, Energy Services representative, Community Development representative, Health Department representative, Fire & Rescue representative and Virginia Department of Alcohol Beverage Control Representative. He also advised that the application would be more user friendly and a calendar of events would be posted to the Town's website. He stressed that he wanted the events to be successful. Council suggested diving deeper into looking at budgeting



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.

for the events. Council voiced concern about prohibited activities including but not limited to verbal threats. Mr. Petty advised that the challenge would be the law and prohibited acts, noting that the Police Department would be made aware of those acts. Council suggested bringing this item back to the February 2nd work session.

CLOSED MEETING

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Ingram 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, a) the Clerk of Council and b) Directors of the Front Royal Economic Development Authority (FREDA); 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, a) the insolvency and disposition of assets of the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Front Royal and the County of Warren, Virginia, and b) the Amendment to Voluntary Settlement Agreement Between the County of Warren, Virginia and the Town of Front Royal, Virginia, Regarding the Compromise for PILOT Meals and Lodging Taxes, entered into April 11, 2018.

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

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Wood

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne 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 Veitenthal, Sealock, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Wood

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Adjourned at approximately 10:51pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 2/2/26